clutch

THE ART OF SKYLANDERS: SUPERCHARGERS

When you see the beautiful final visuals of SuperChargers, what you're looking at is the combined effort of many people — from the artists who first depicted the environments and characters or built in-game assets for them, to the engineers who provided the tech to make everything render perfectly, and the designers who assembled all the pieces into playable, aesthetically pleasing levels. It's a sight to behold, and seeing the process laid out so clearly here is all the more inspiring.

– Darren Malley

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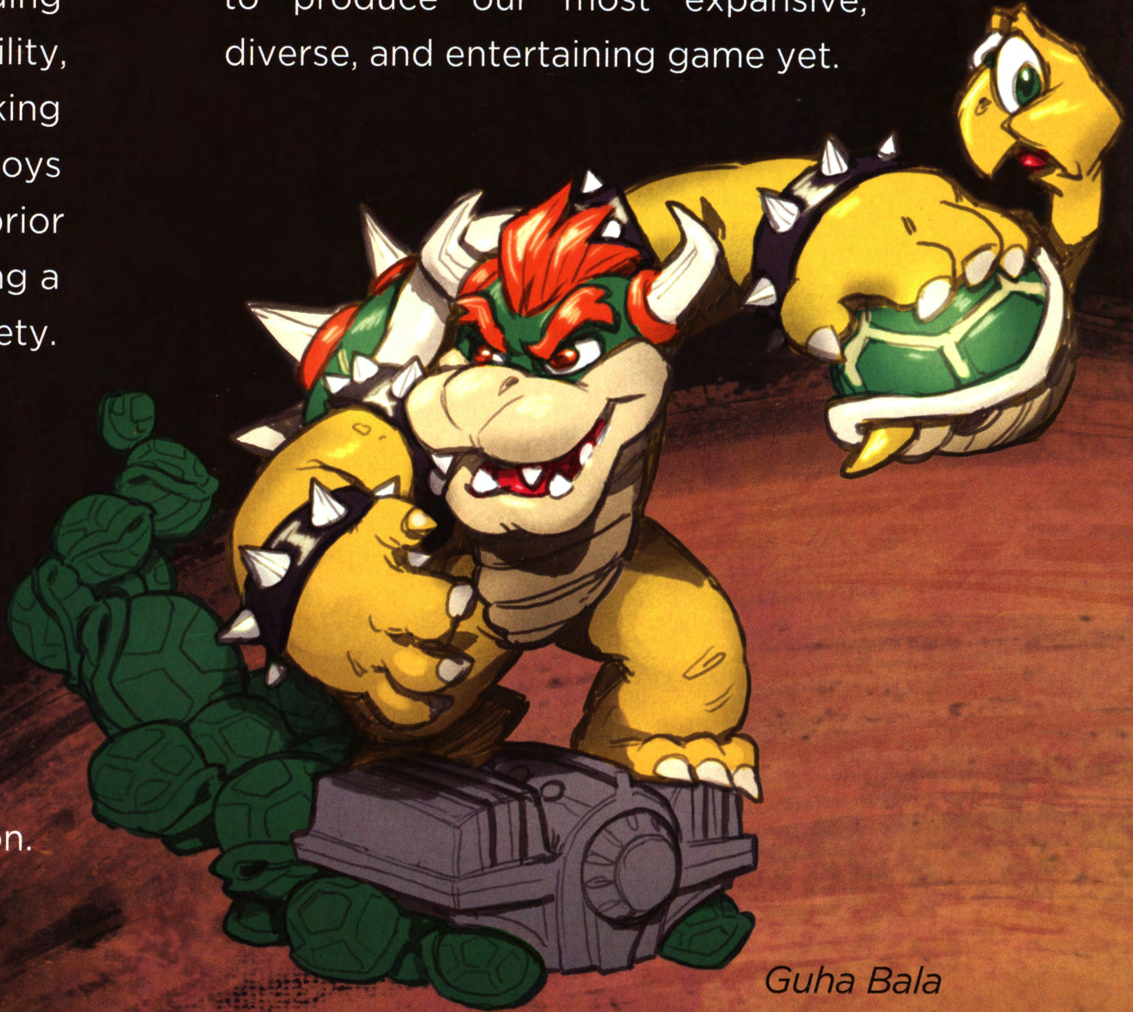
FOREWORD

by Guha & Karthik Bala

In *Skylanders SuperChargers*, we set out to fundamentally change how players enjoyed *Skylanders*, and to bring a new type of toy to life: vehicles. It was a lofty goal that presented some tough challenges. First, changing the gameplay to incorporate vehicles while building on *Skylanders'* strengths of accessibility, charm, and epic adventure. Second, making distinctive vehicle experiences with the toys and the game that stand apart from prior vehicle toys and games. And third, following a child's imagination: no limits and huge variety.

Channeling our inner child, our vehicle aspirations started with fast cars, motorcycles, and trucks. But we quickly went to the sky with planes, helicopters, and UFOs; then into the sea with submarines, powerboats, and hovercraft; and finally, we wrapped it all into a seamless flow with on-foot action.

We also integrated variety into our unique levels (each with a cool game twist and visual signature) and in our first rich online experience, including multiplayer racing. In exploring these areas, we pushed our own boundaries to produce our most expansive, diverse, and entertaining game yet.



Guha Bala

The art of *Skylanders SuperChargers* is a memento of our team's creative journey from the earliest notions of what vehicles looked like in the Skylands, to how they fit with the world, the heroes, the enemies, and what's fun about them. It captured a key element of our studio's culture: the iteration between design, art, and technology, each riffing on the other to shape the creative experience. It helped us visualize the high bar for quality that we value, as well as the magical experience we had in mind for our players. The art also reminded us that in the face of tremendous creative challenges, the crazy adventure that we had embarked upon would be worth the journey.

As with all journeys, the folks who continuously supported us deserve our greatest appreciation, especially our spouses and significant others, our partner studios, and our partner companies. They help us realize our aspirations.

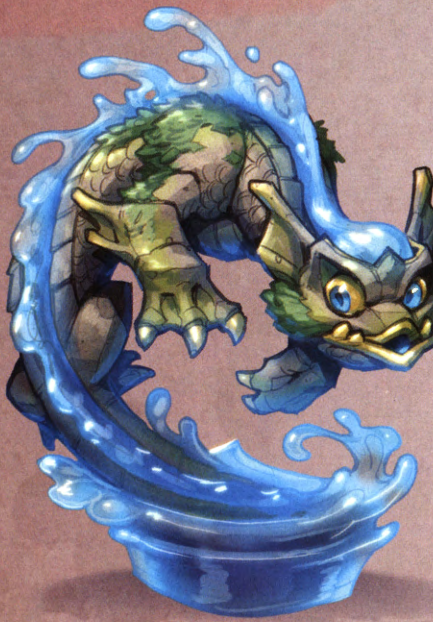
Karthik Bala

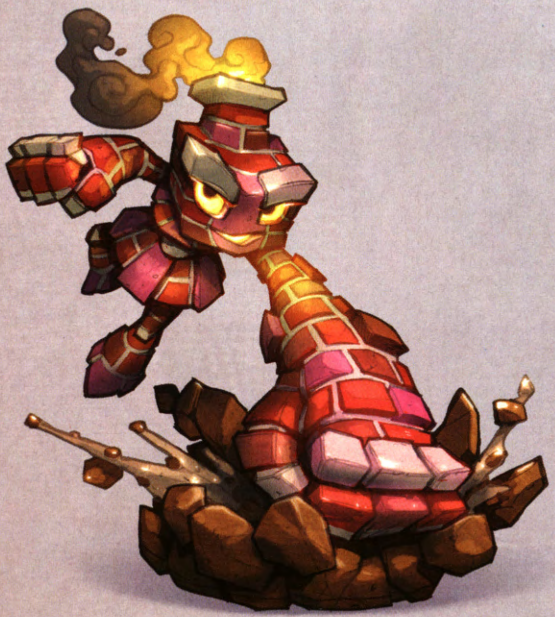
I could have never imagined the ways we'd transform even the most common vehicle types into such colorful, fun rides. They absolutely belong in Skylands, and you absolutely want them on your shelf.

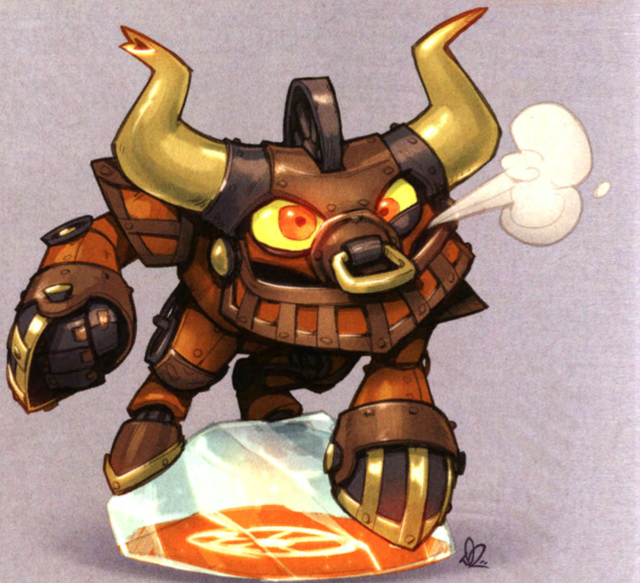
– Stephen Moss

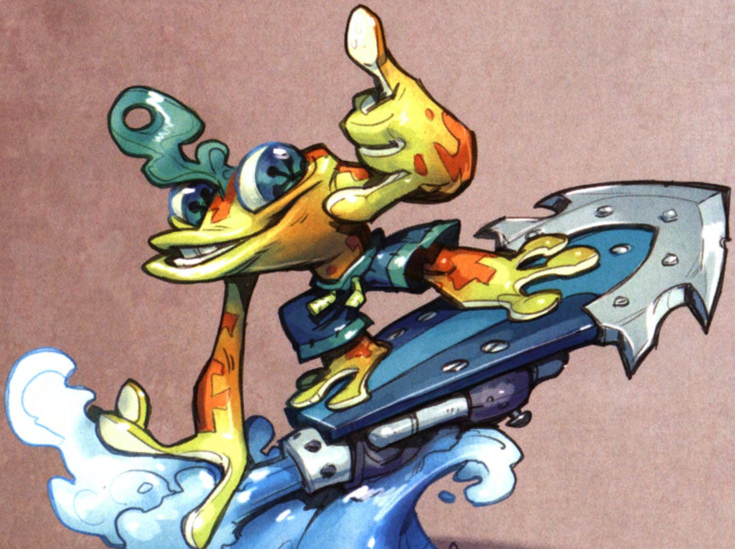
HEROES & VEHICLES

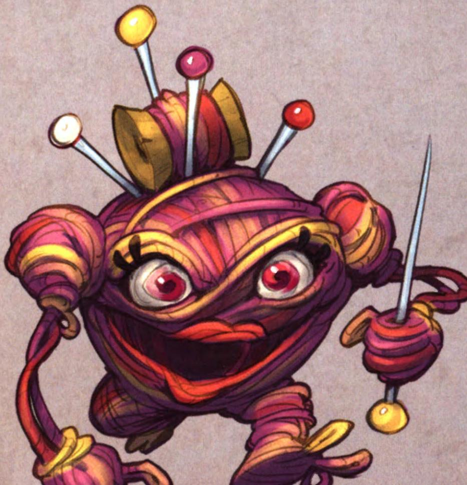
CHARACTER & VEHICLE EXPLORATION

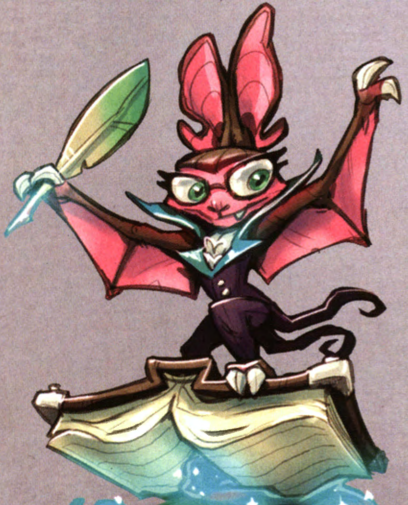






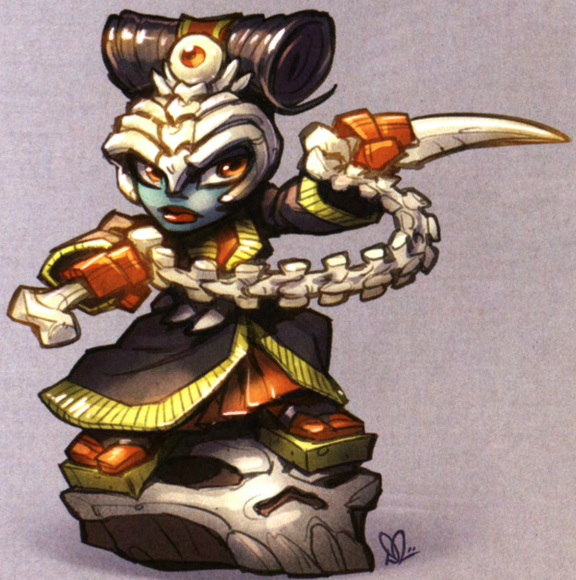


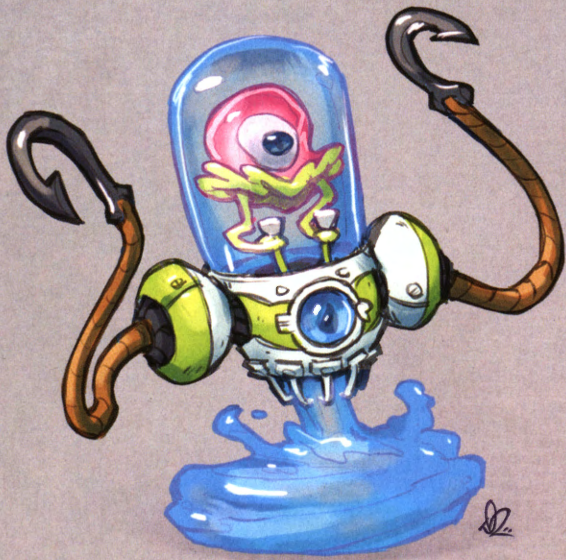


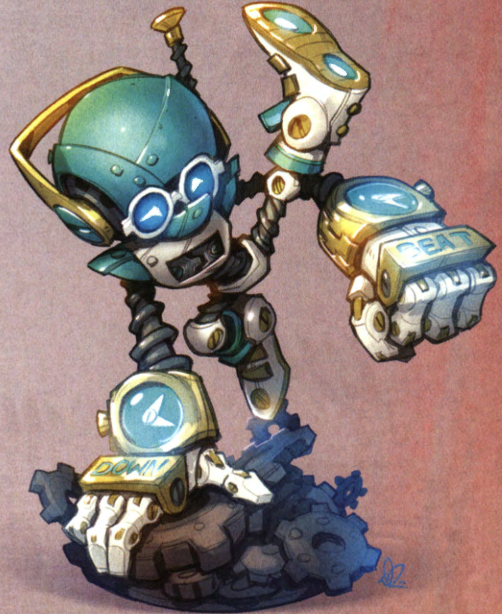


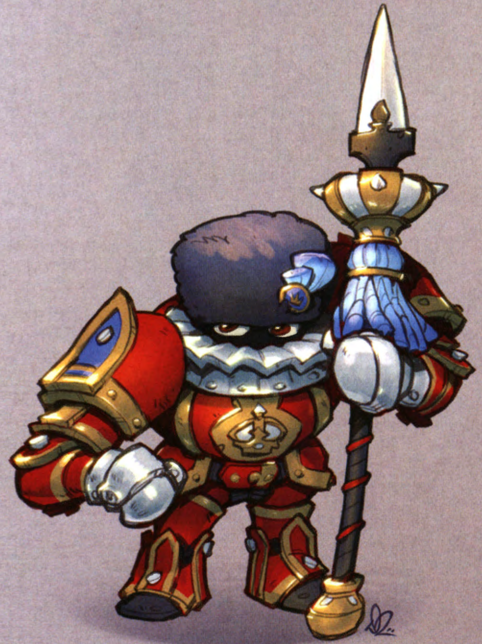
It was a long and difficult road to the finish line for SuperChargers, but the passion and drive of everyone here at VV came through and delivered another fantastic experience.

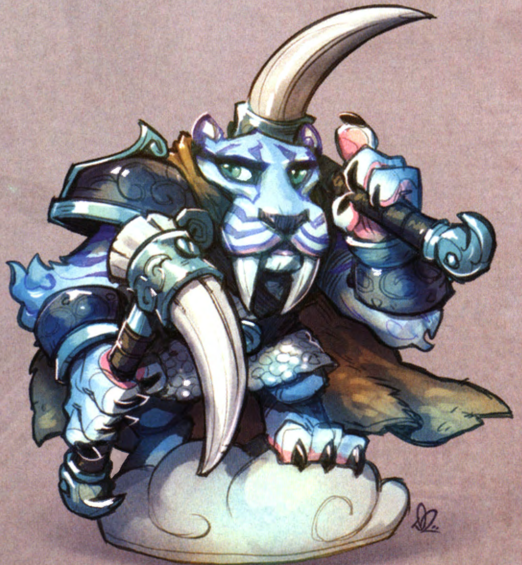
– Romy Cayetano

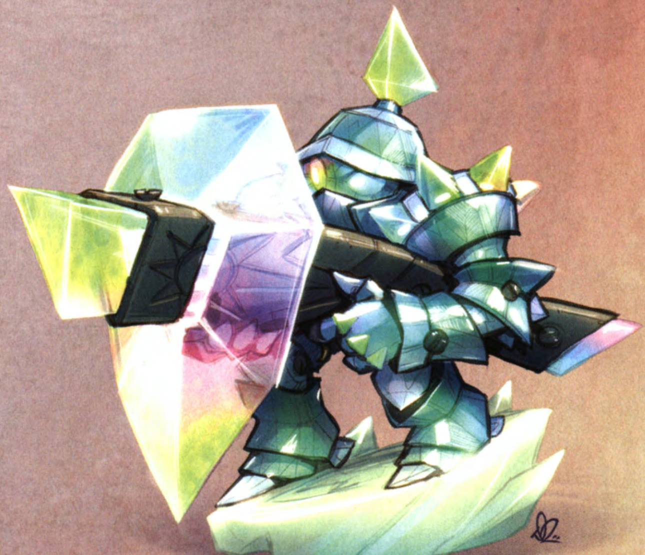


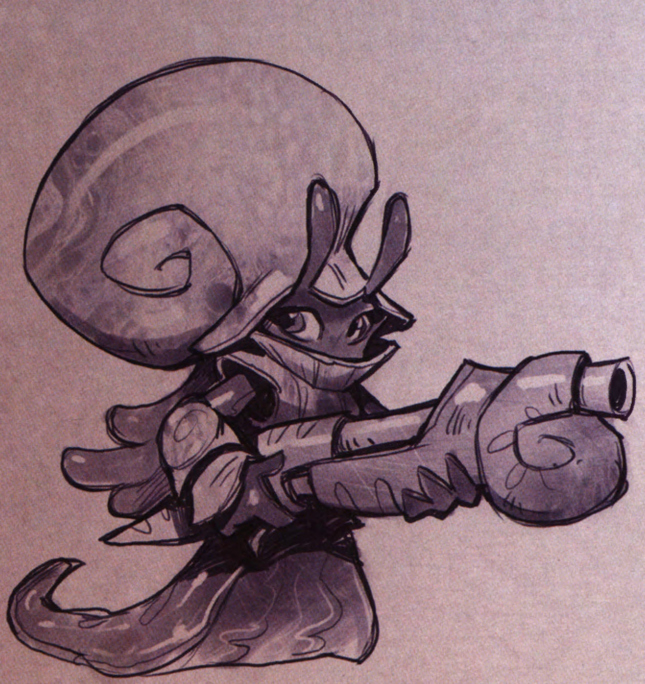


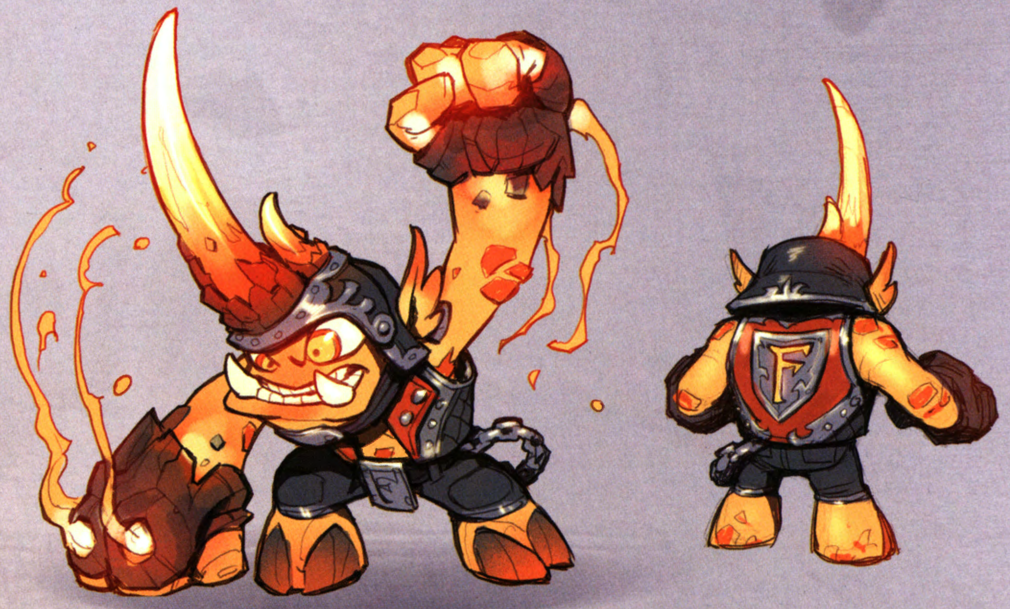


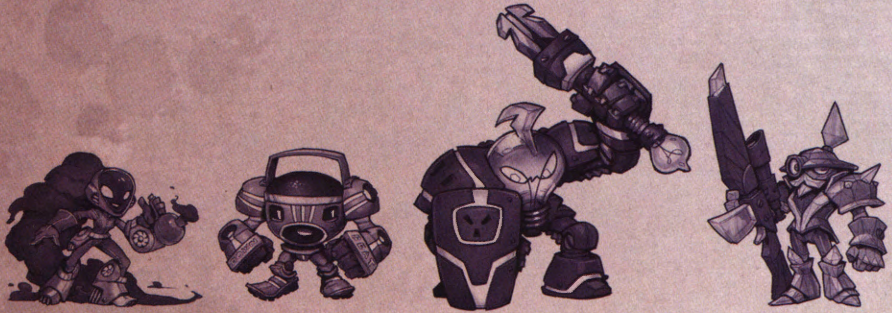








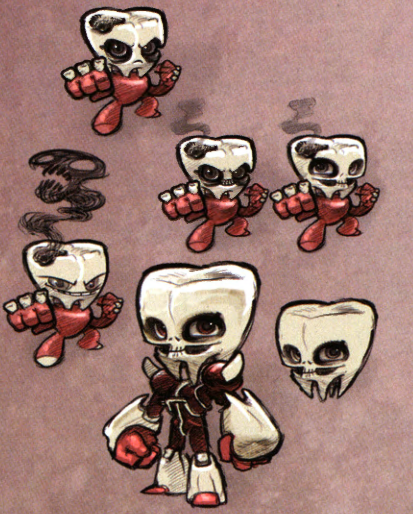


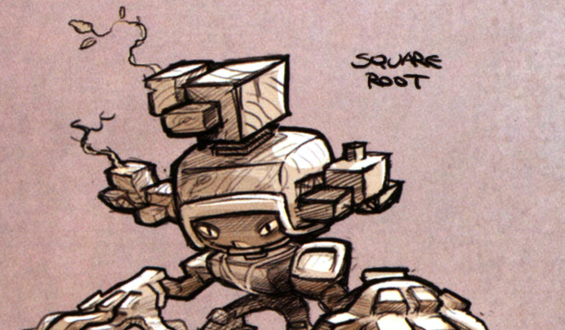


FORTUNE CUCKOO

ROLLER OYSTER

ROOSTER BOOSTER

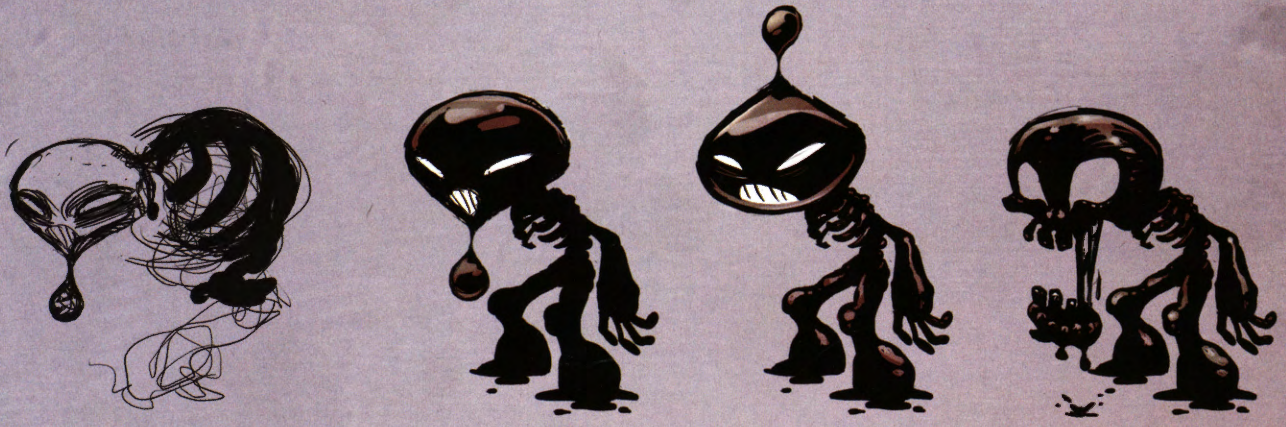


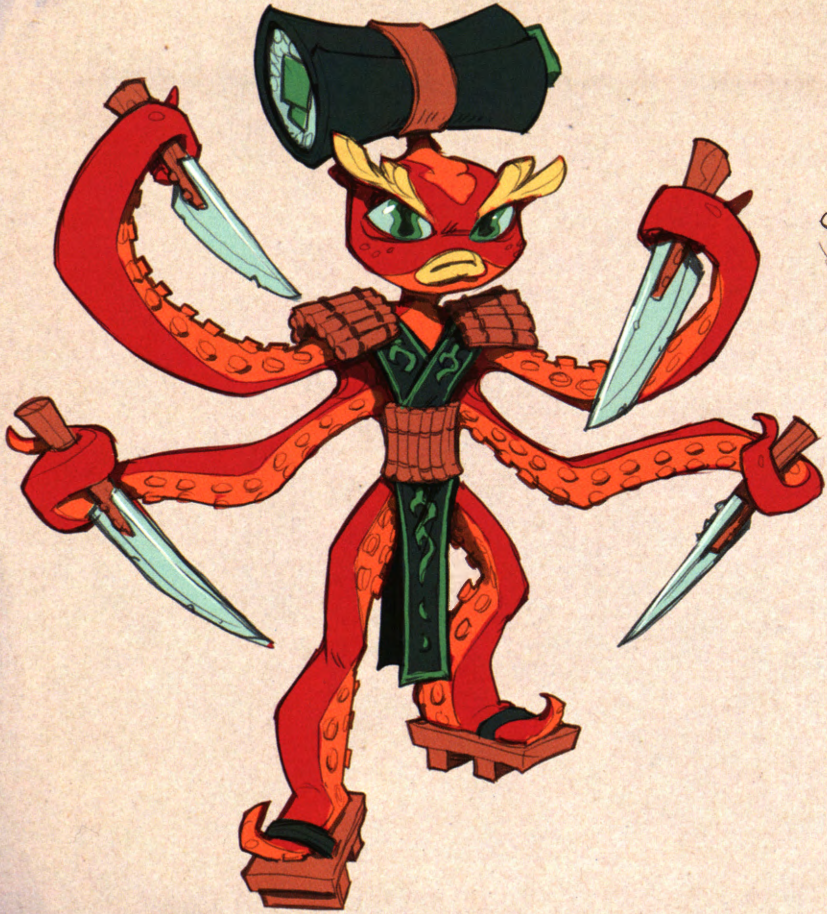

SQUARE ROOT

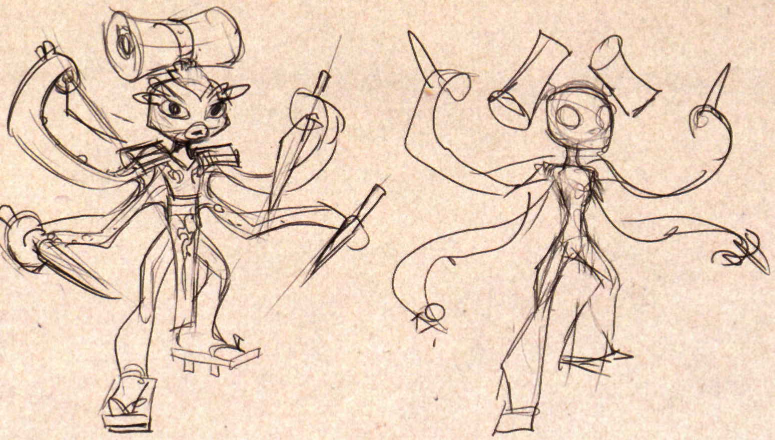
TAXI CRAB DRIVER

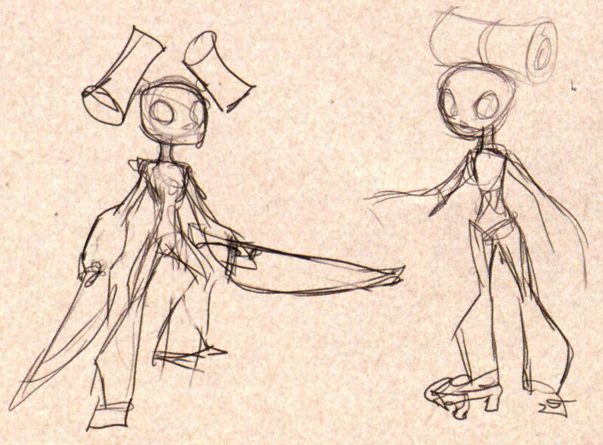
EEL USIONIST

ORCUS POCUS

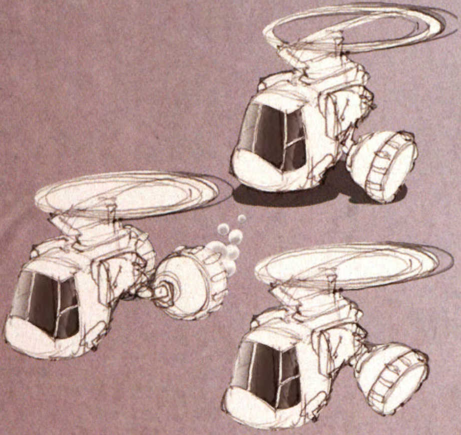


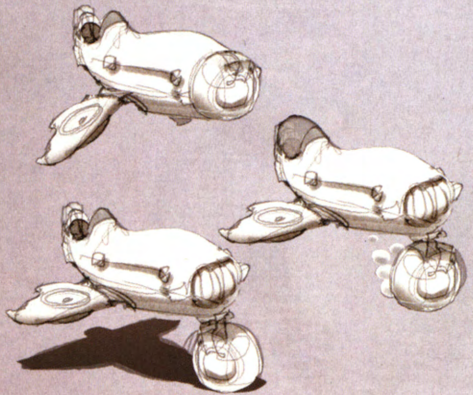


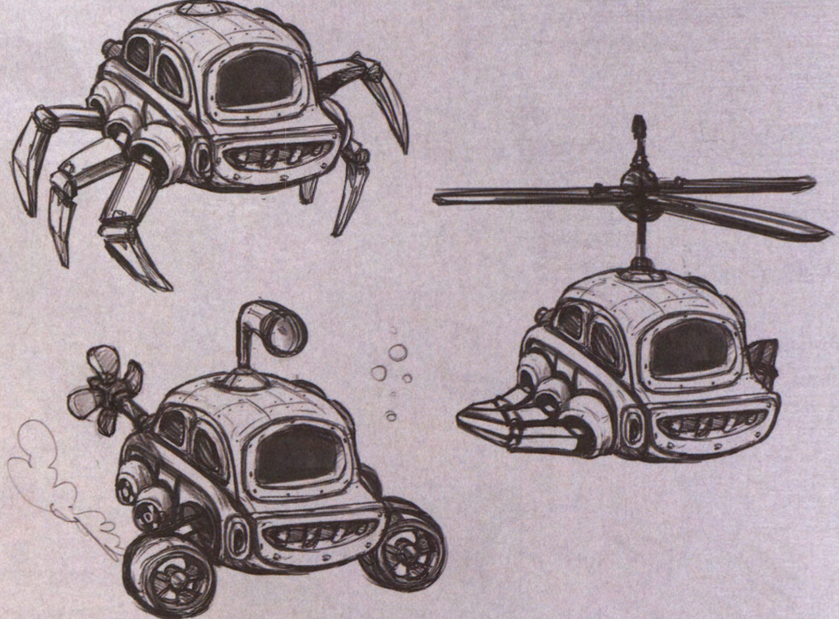


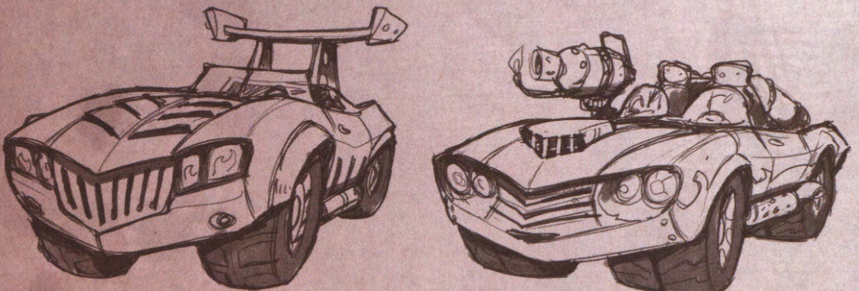


FIRE
GYRL
SUSH CHEF
SQUID/OCTO
WASABI



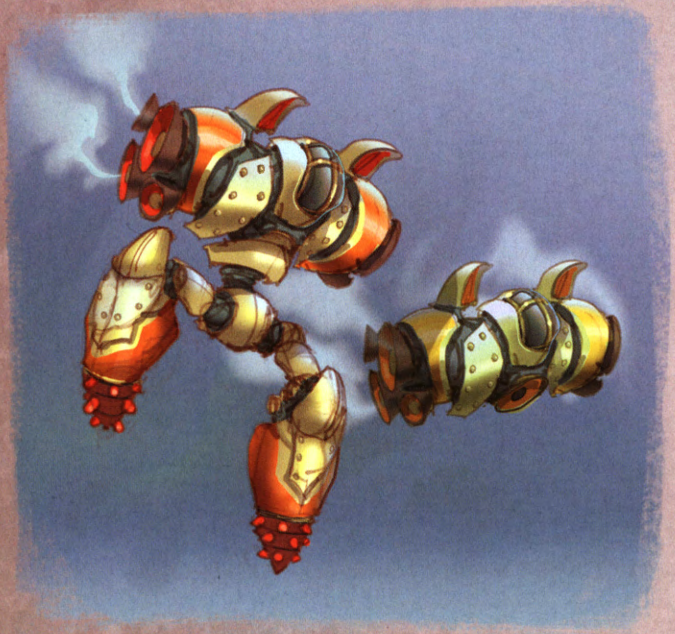


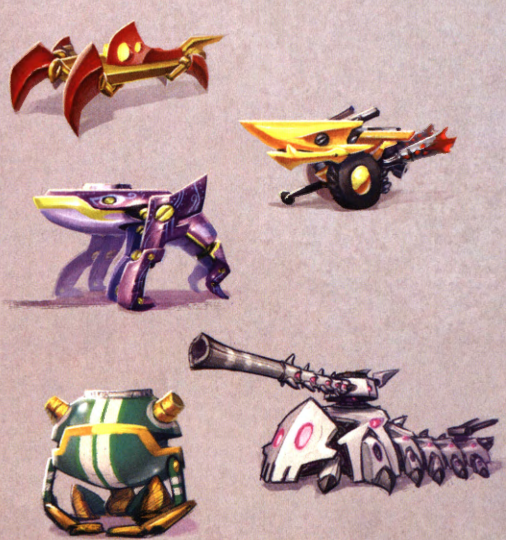


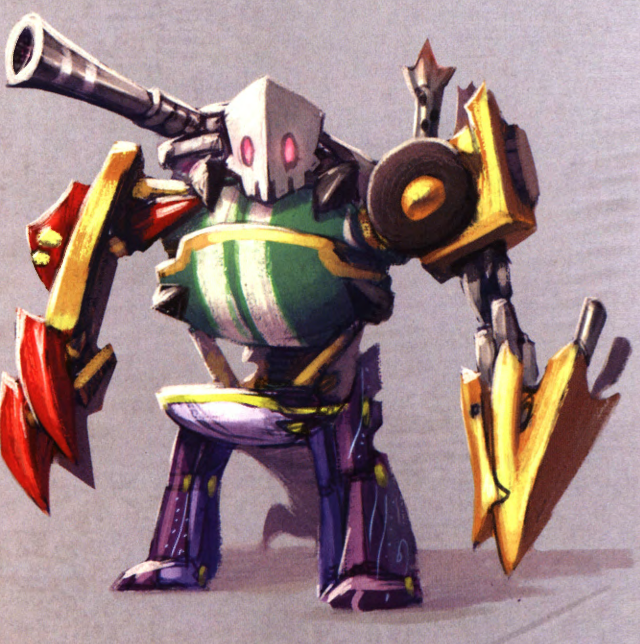


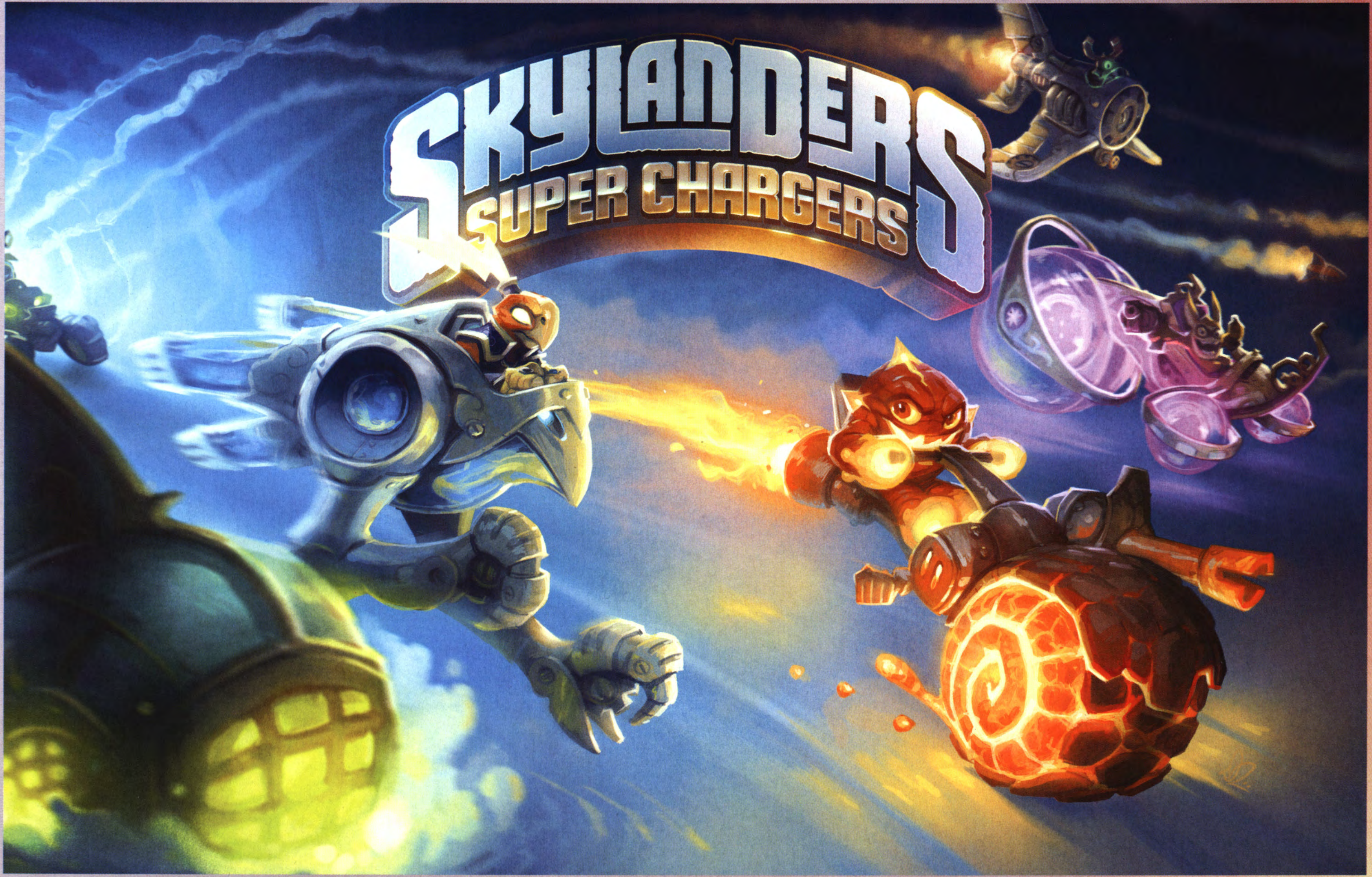
I never actually saw this concept before. How come we don't have Skytron in our game?

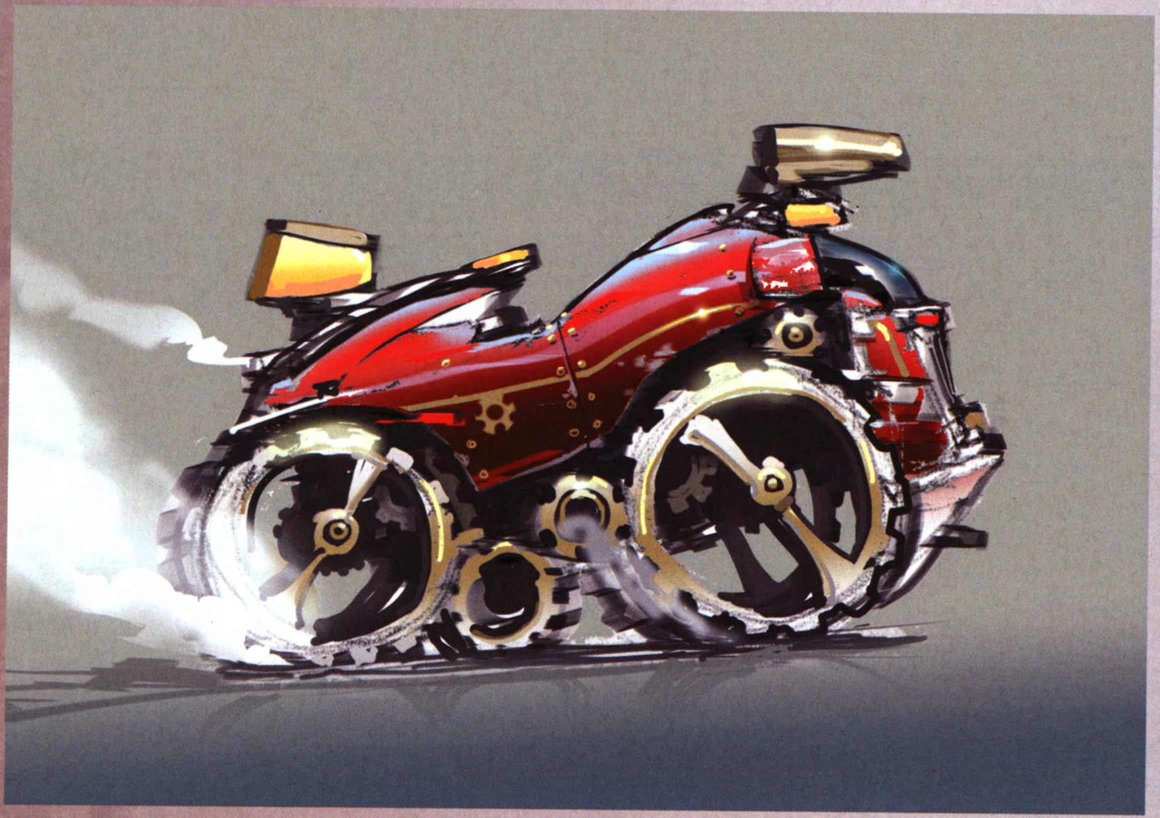
– Darren Malley

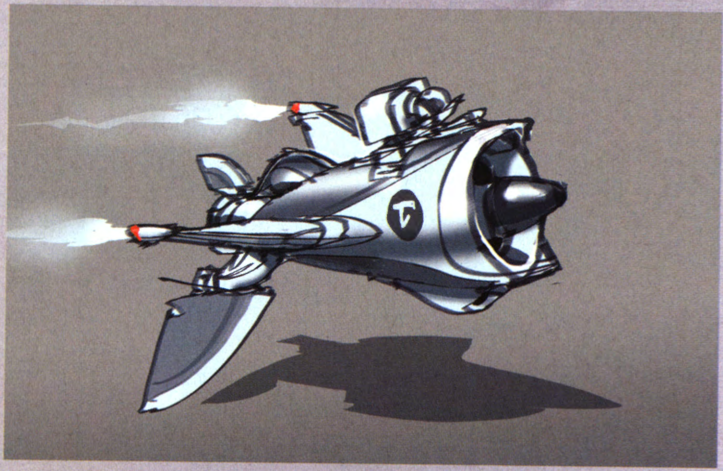


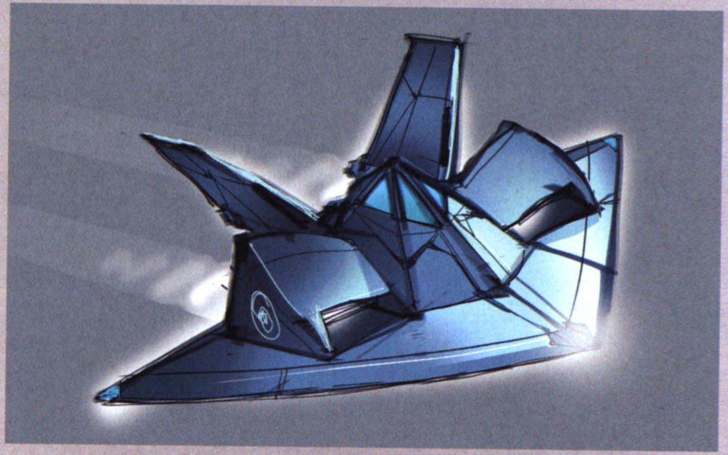


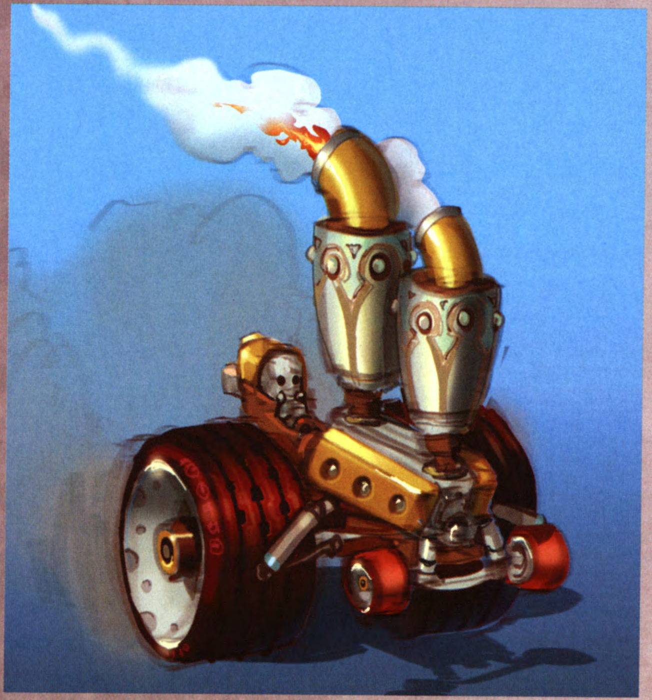


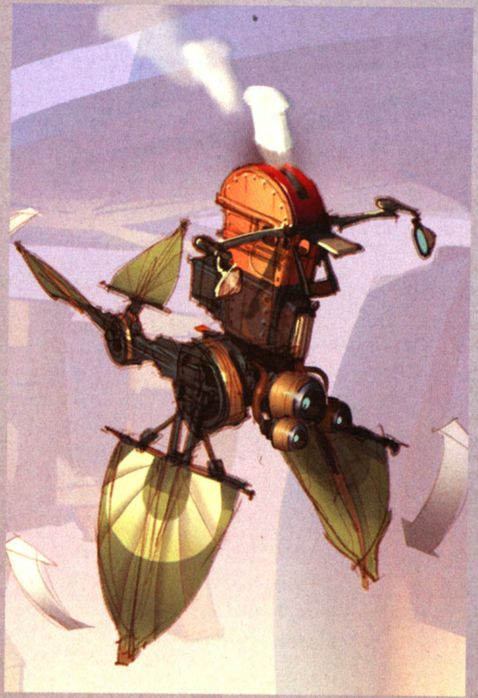

SKYLANDERS
SUPER CHARGERS

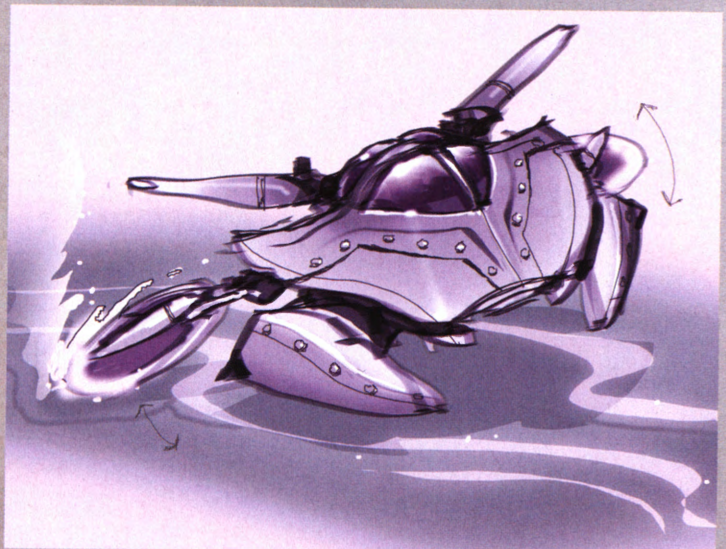


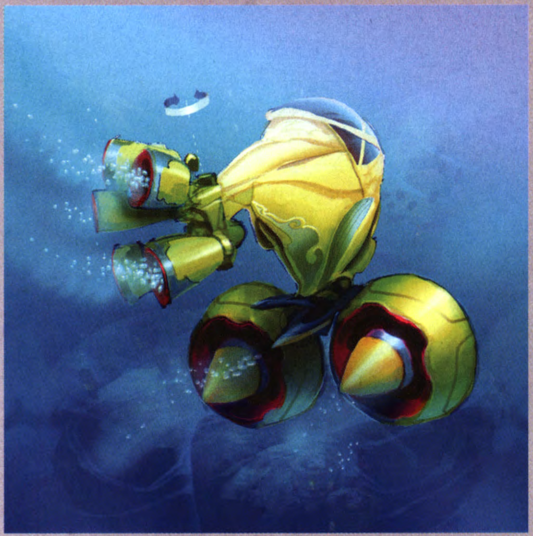


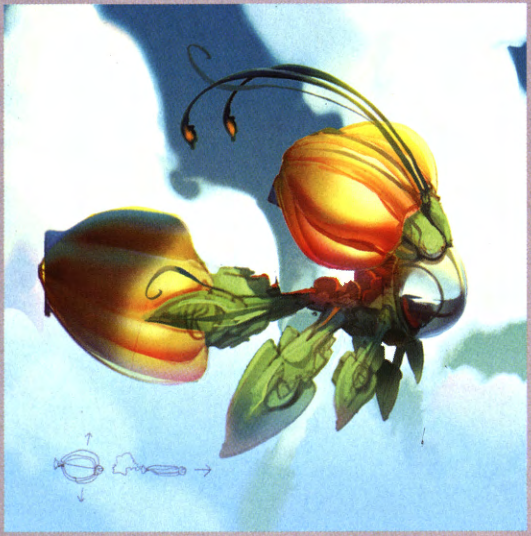


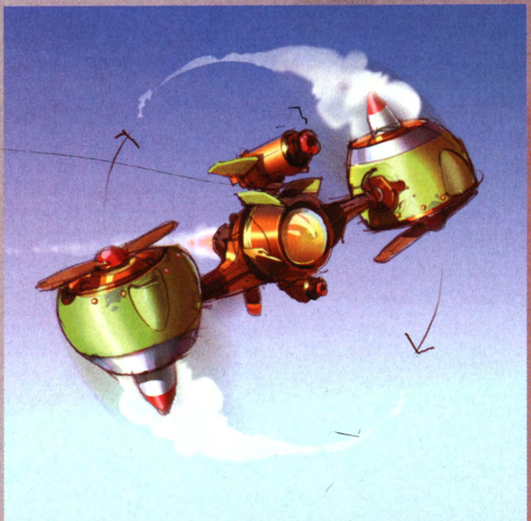


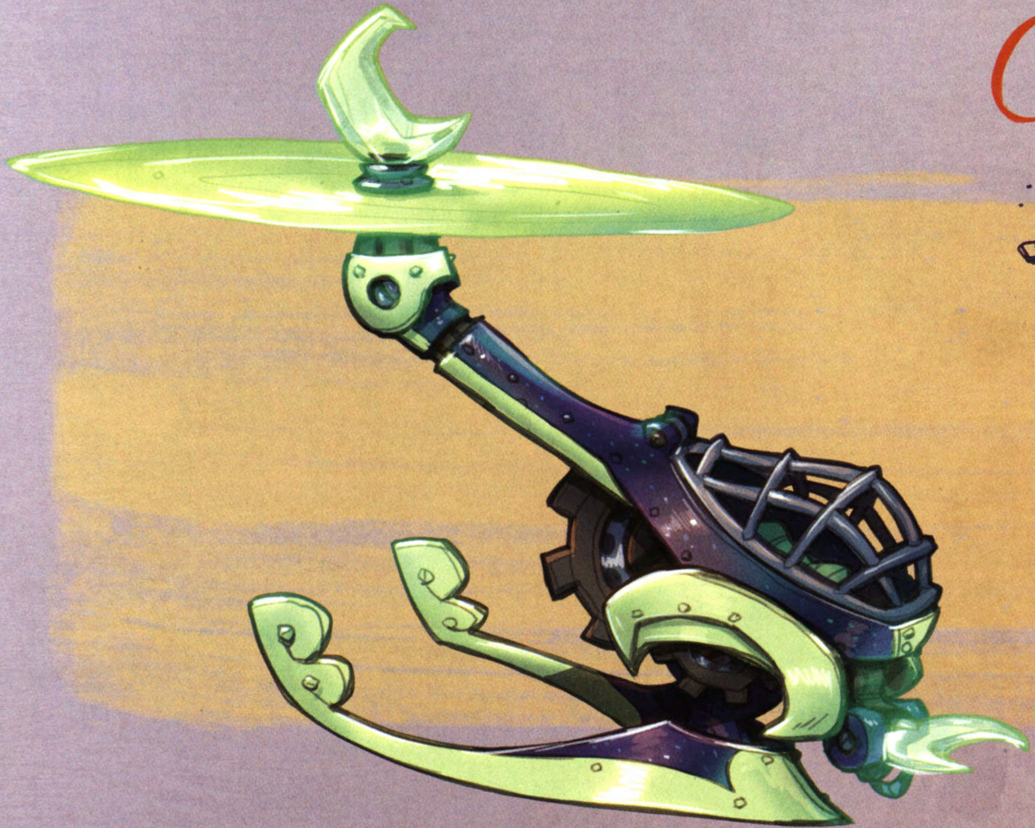


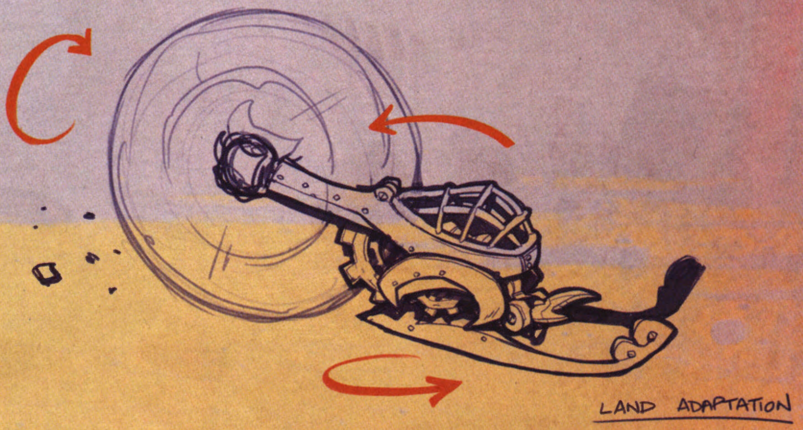


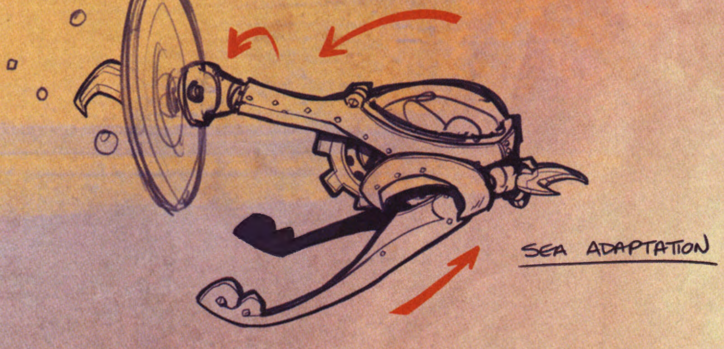




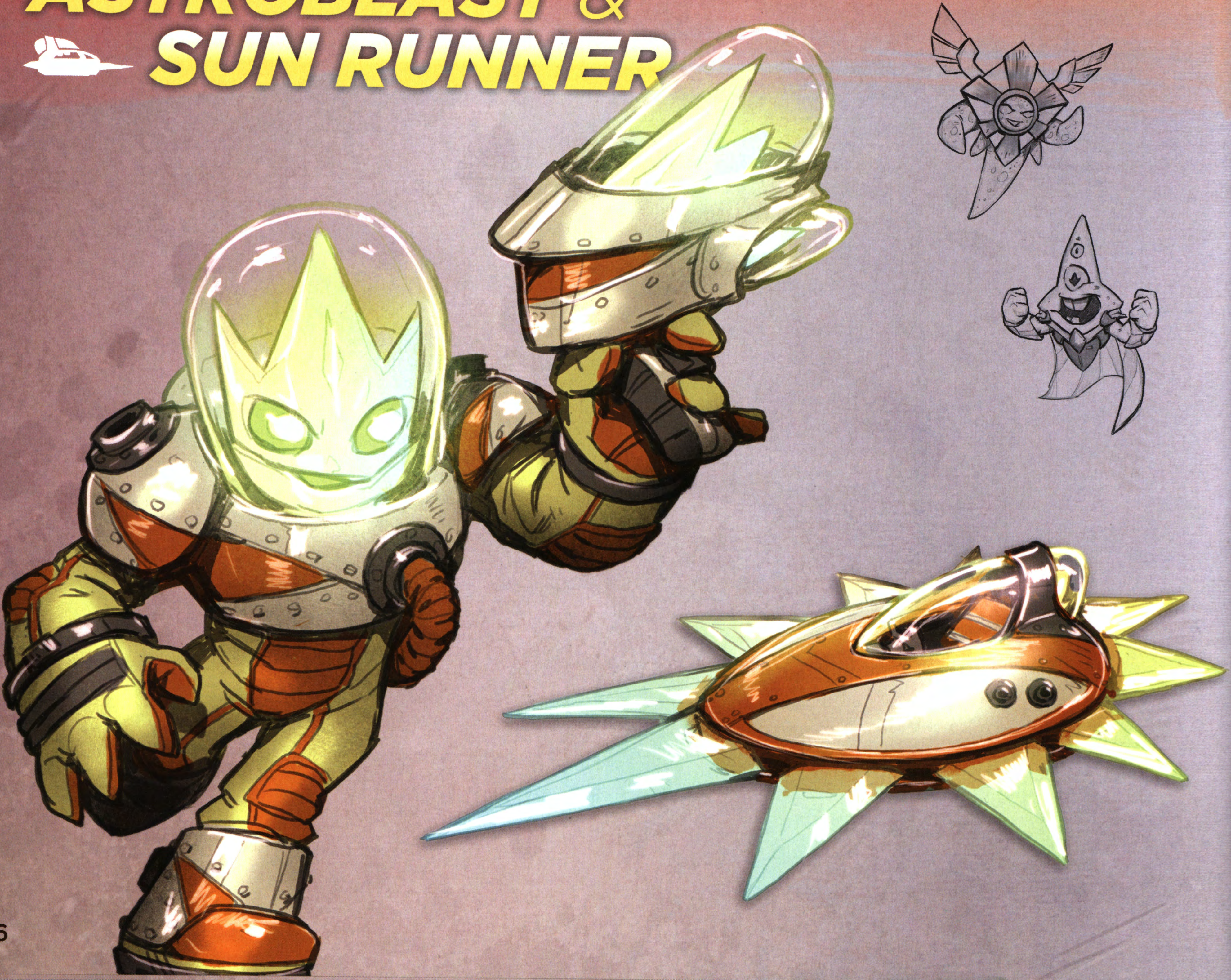


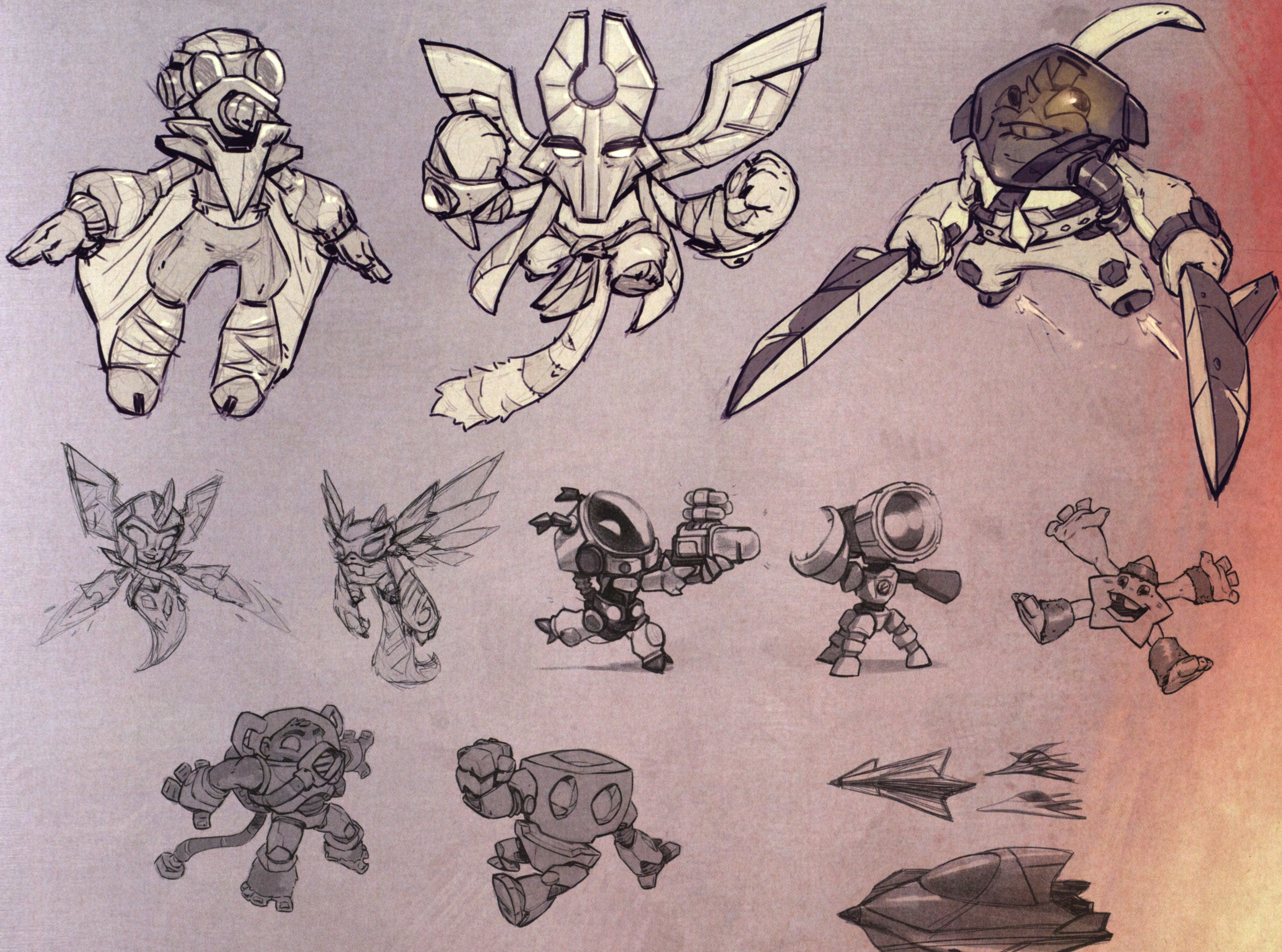



LAND ADAPTATION


SEA ADAPTATION

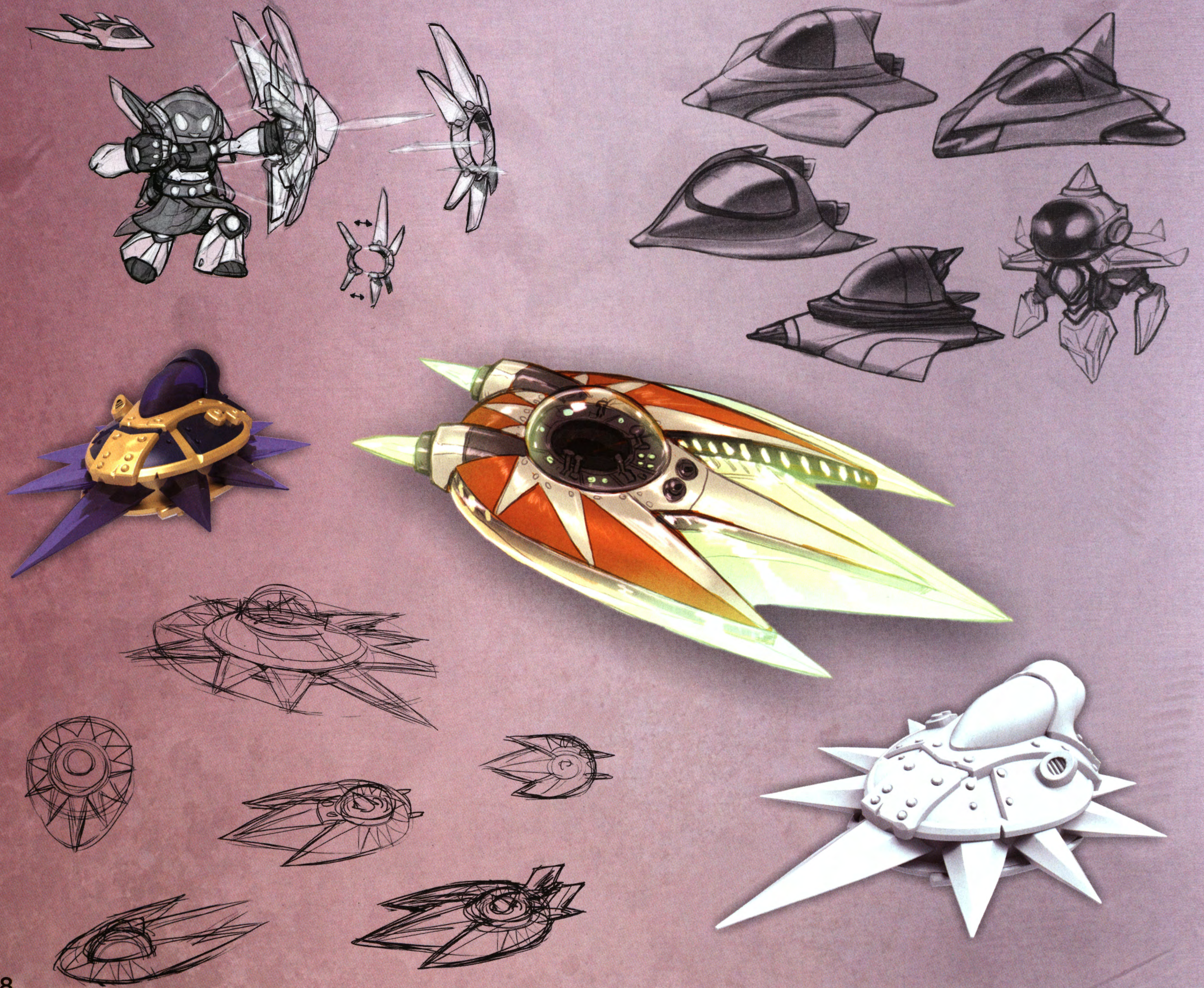
ASTROBLAST & SUN RUNNER





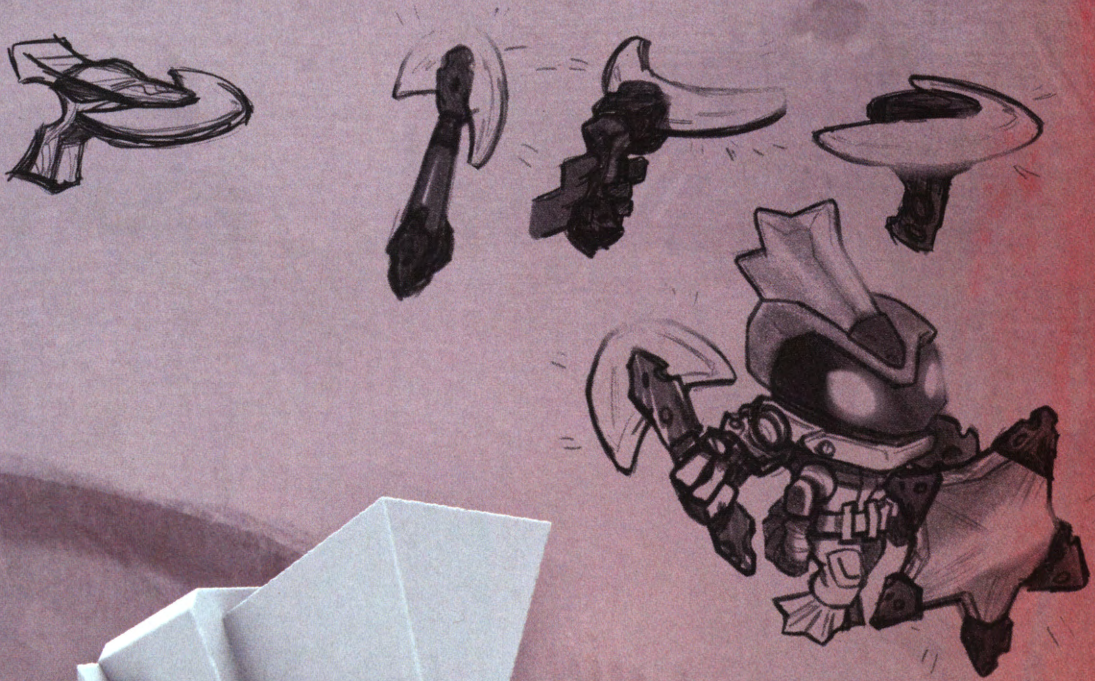
Exploring the element of Light is one of the most challenging aspects of our character designs.

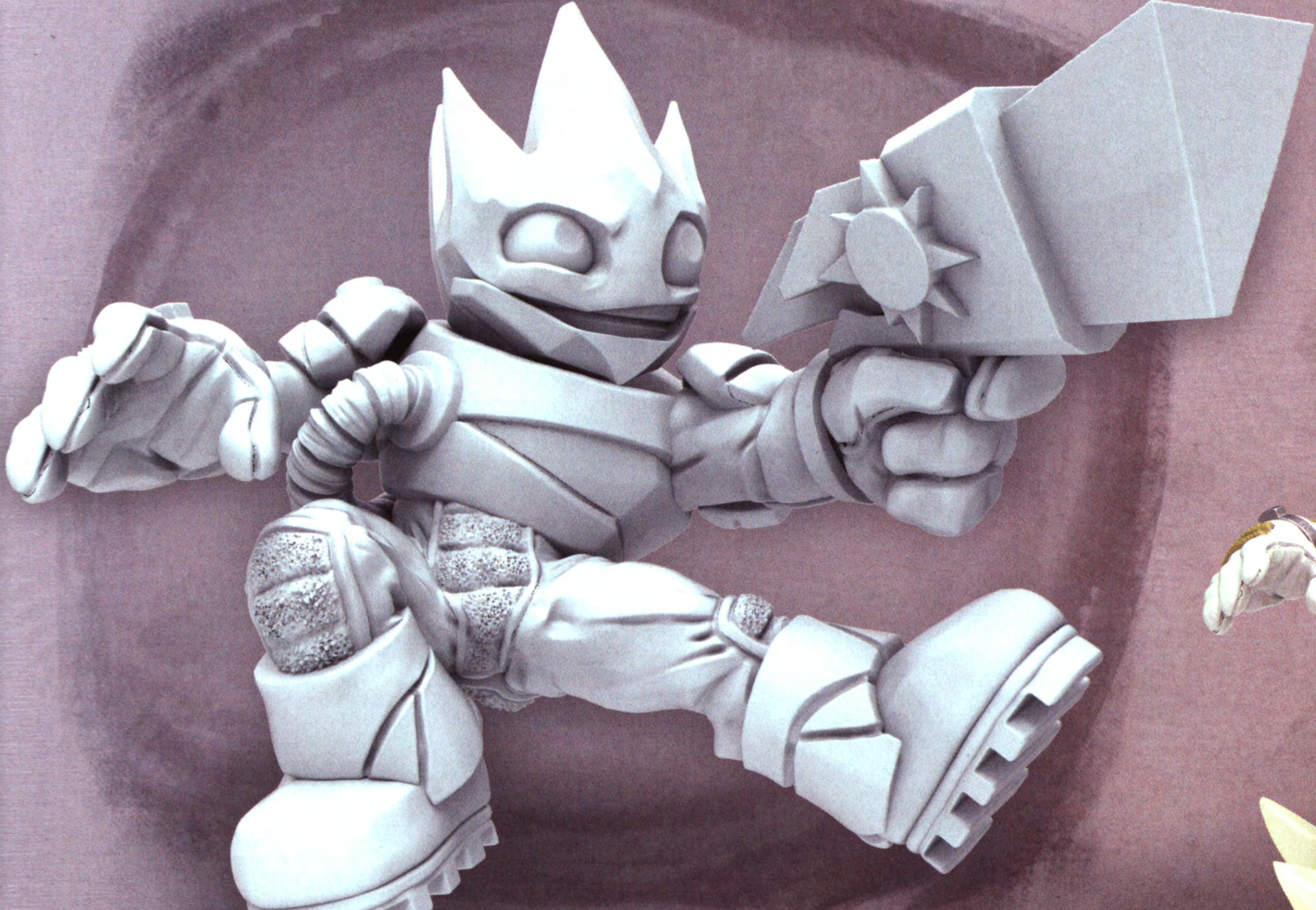
– Buck Chantel



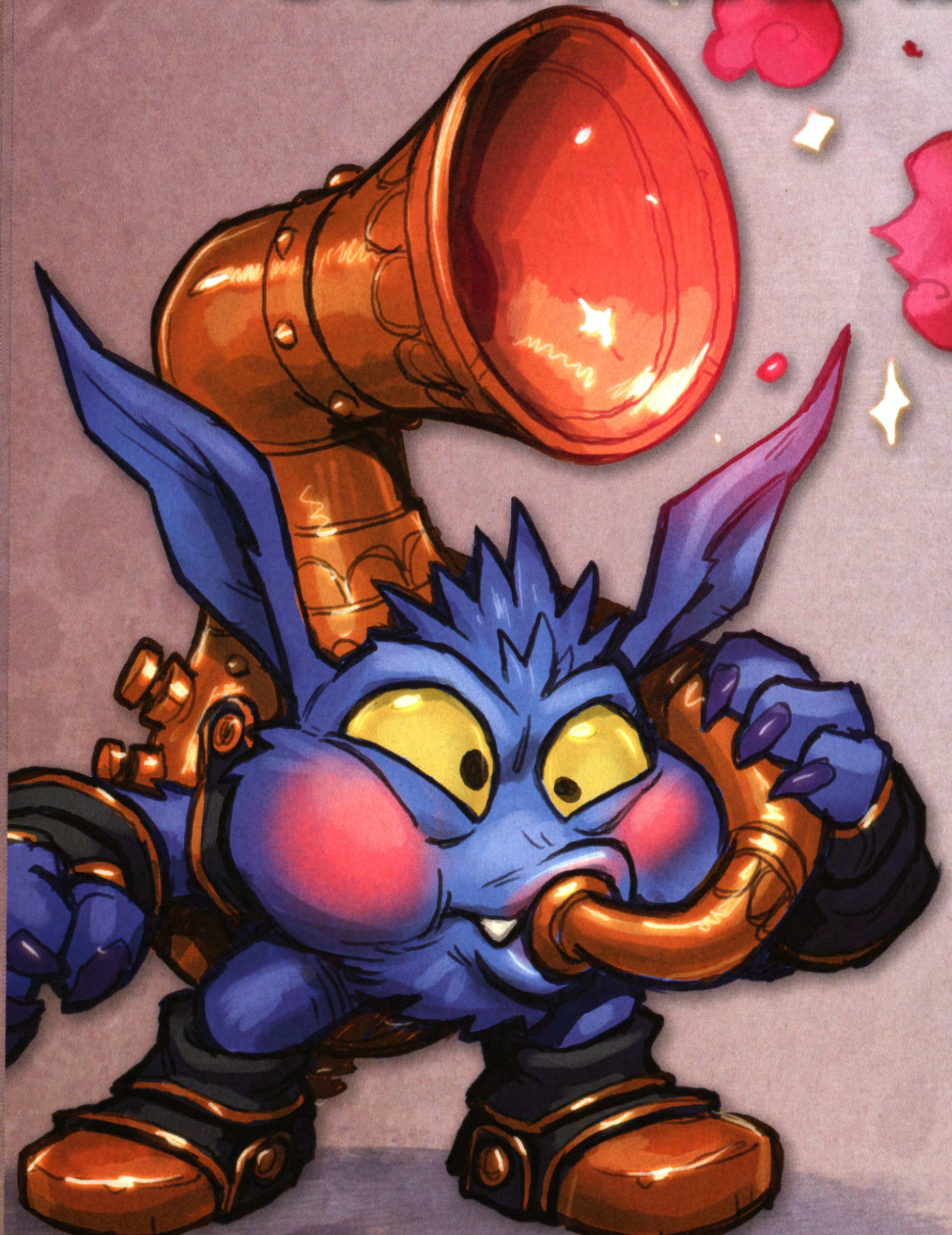
Some people call Astroblast a Space Cowboy.
See what I did there?

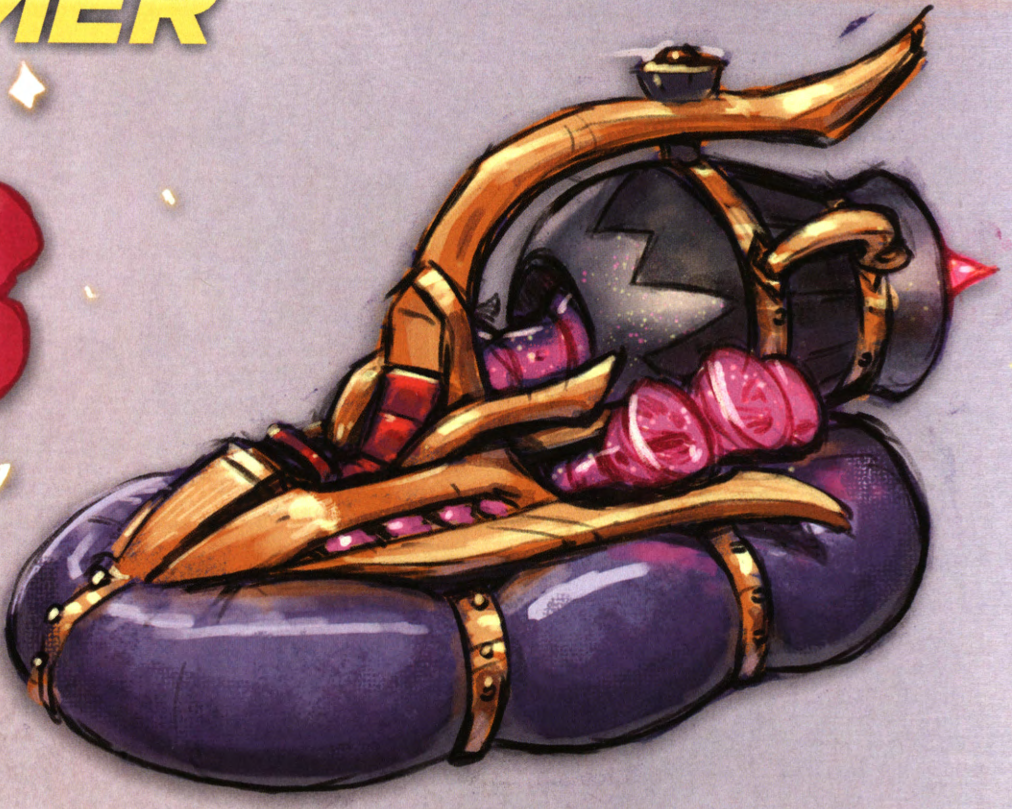
– Jeremy Russo

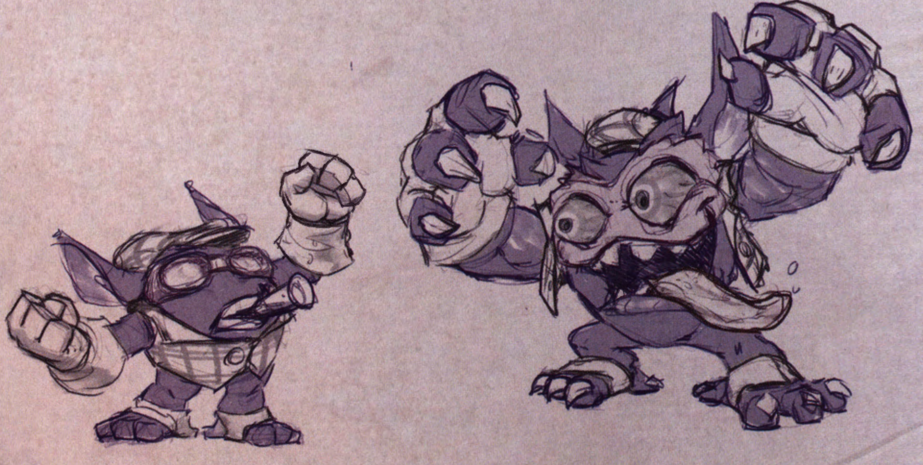


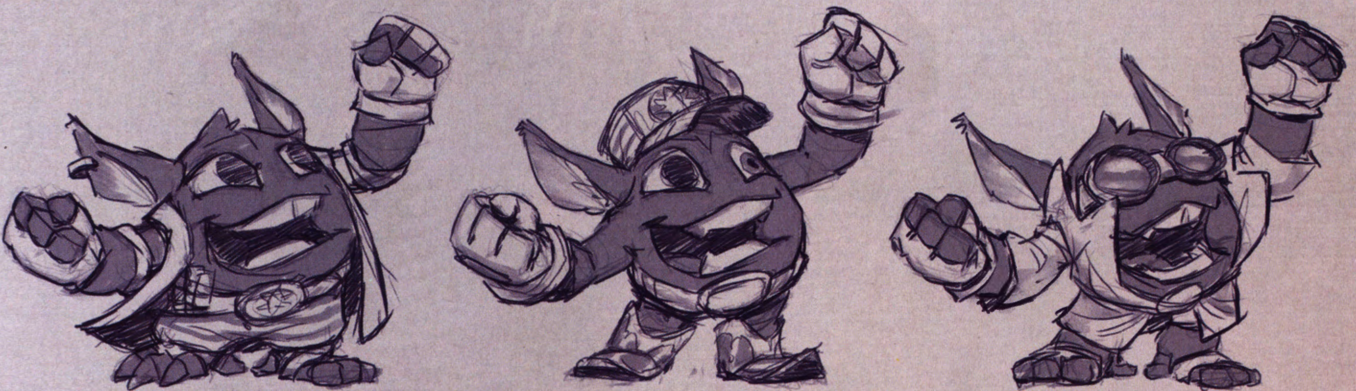


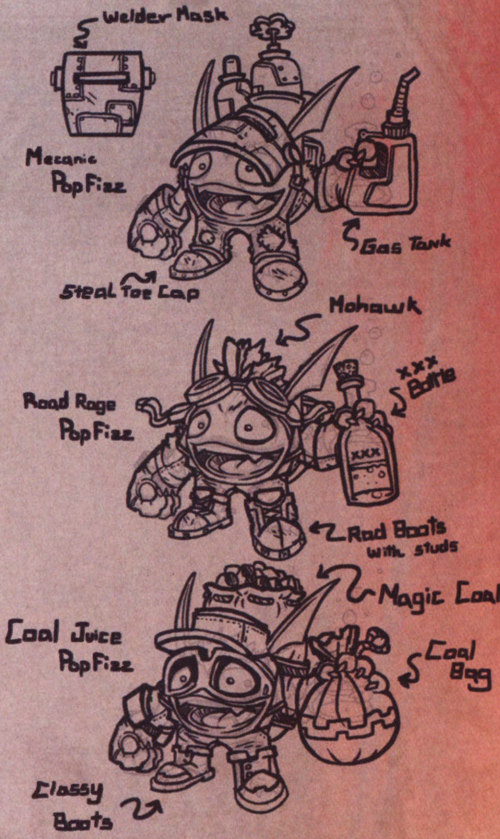
BIG BUBBLE POP FIZZ & SODA SKIMMER

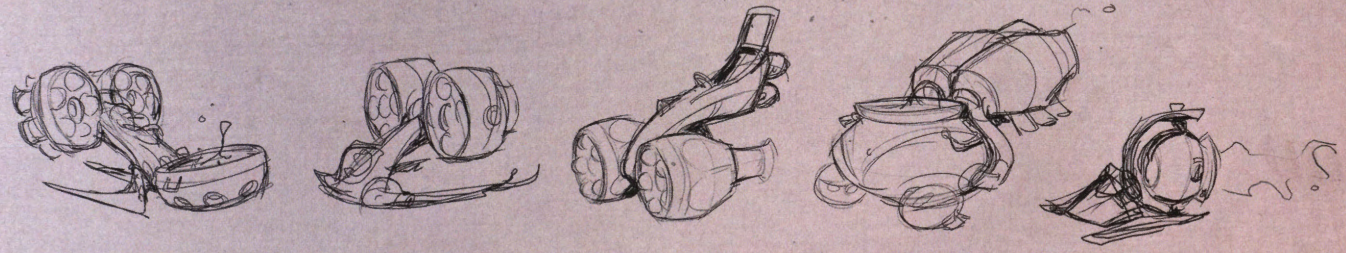


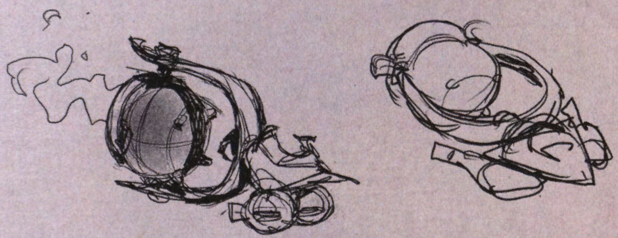


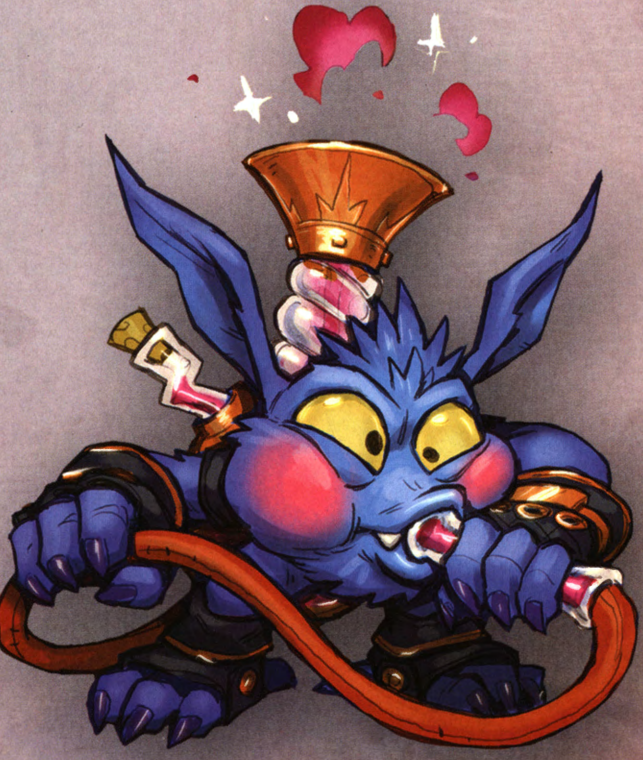


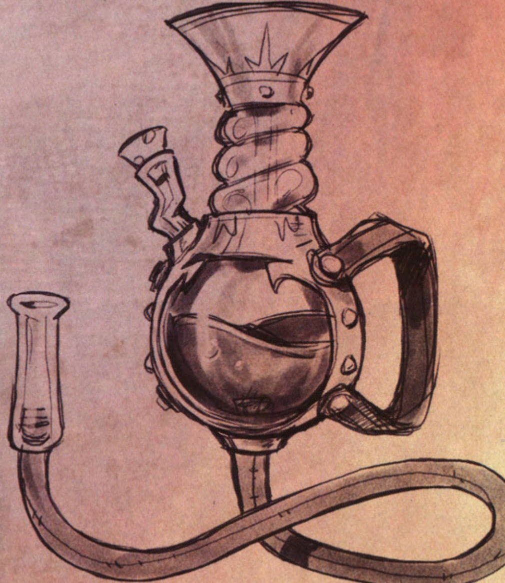



Welder Mask
Mecanic PopFizz
Gas Tank
Steal Toe Cap
Mohawk
Road Rage PopFizz
XXX Bottle
XXX
Rad Boots with studs
Magic Coal
Coal Juice PopFizz
Coal Bag
Classy Boots



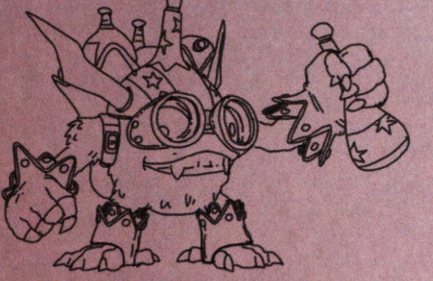


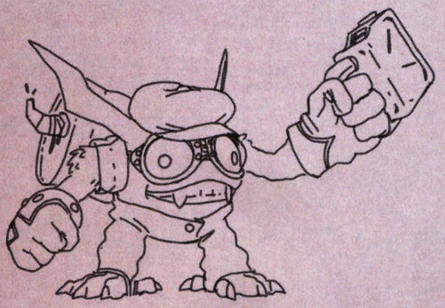


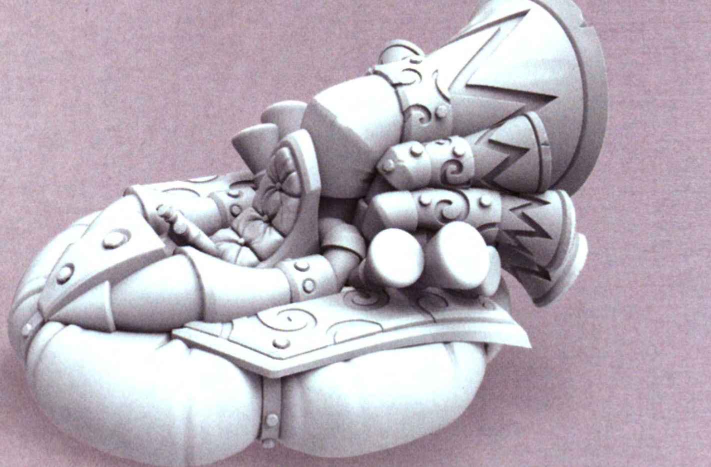


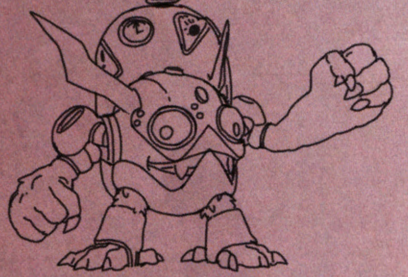
Every iteration of this game has become a new artistic adventure and a new challenge. It feels good to be a part of that from year to year.

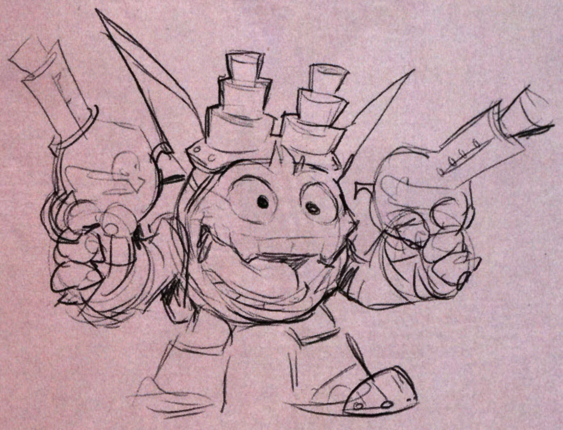
– Danielle Godbout

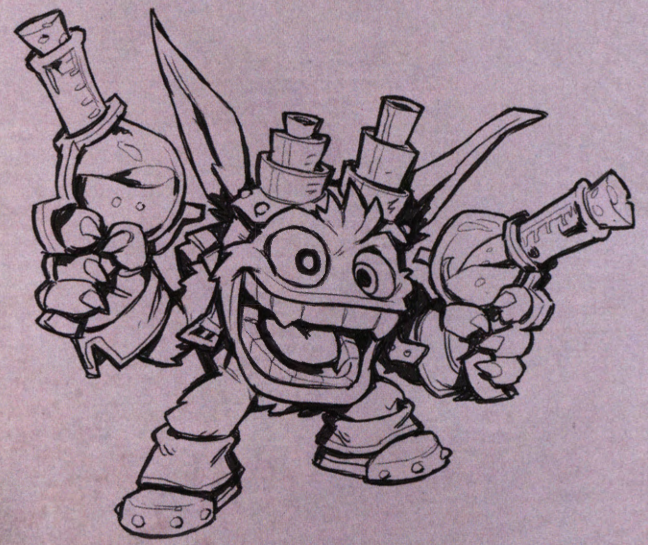


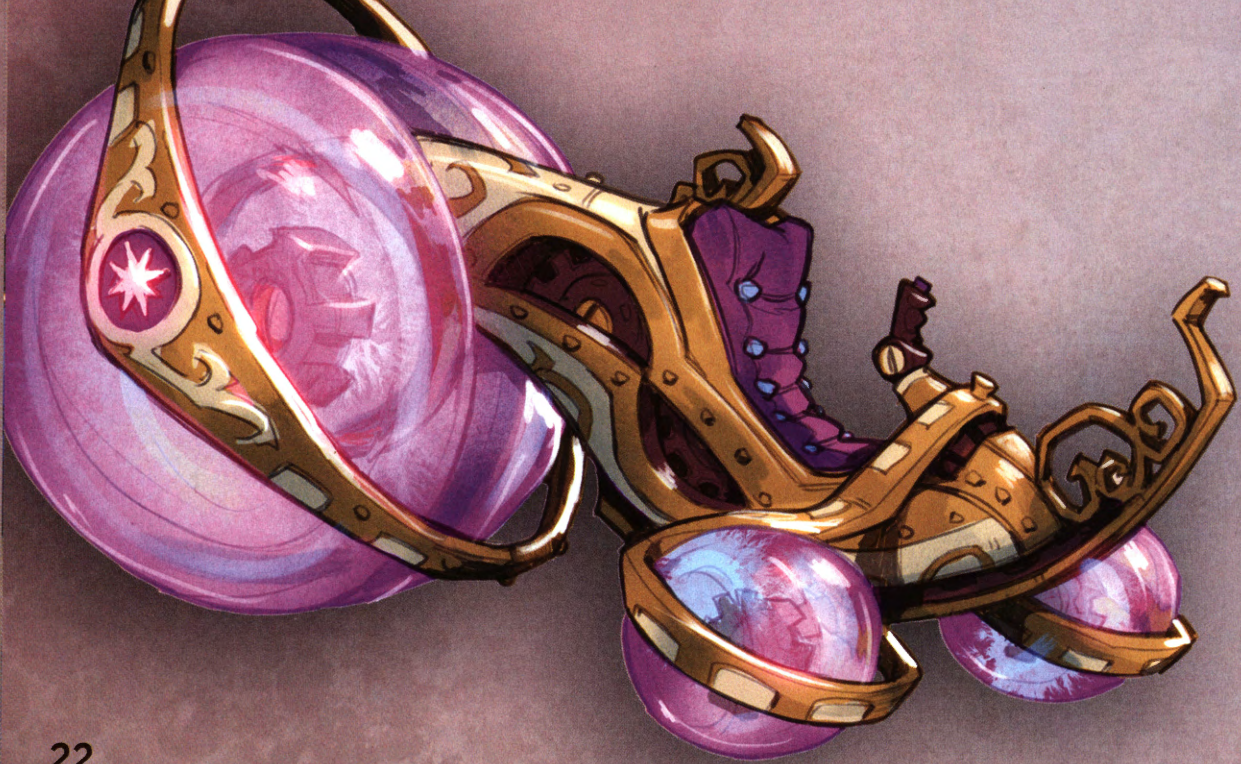






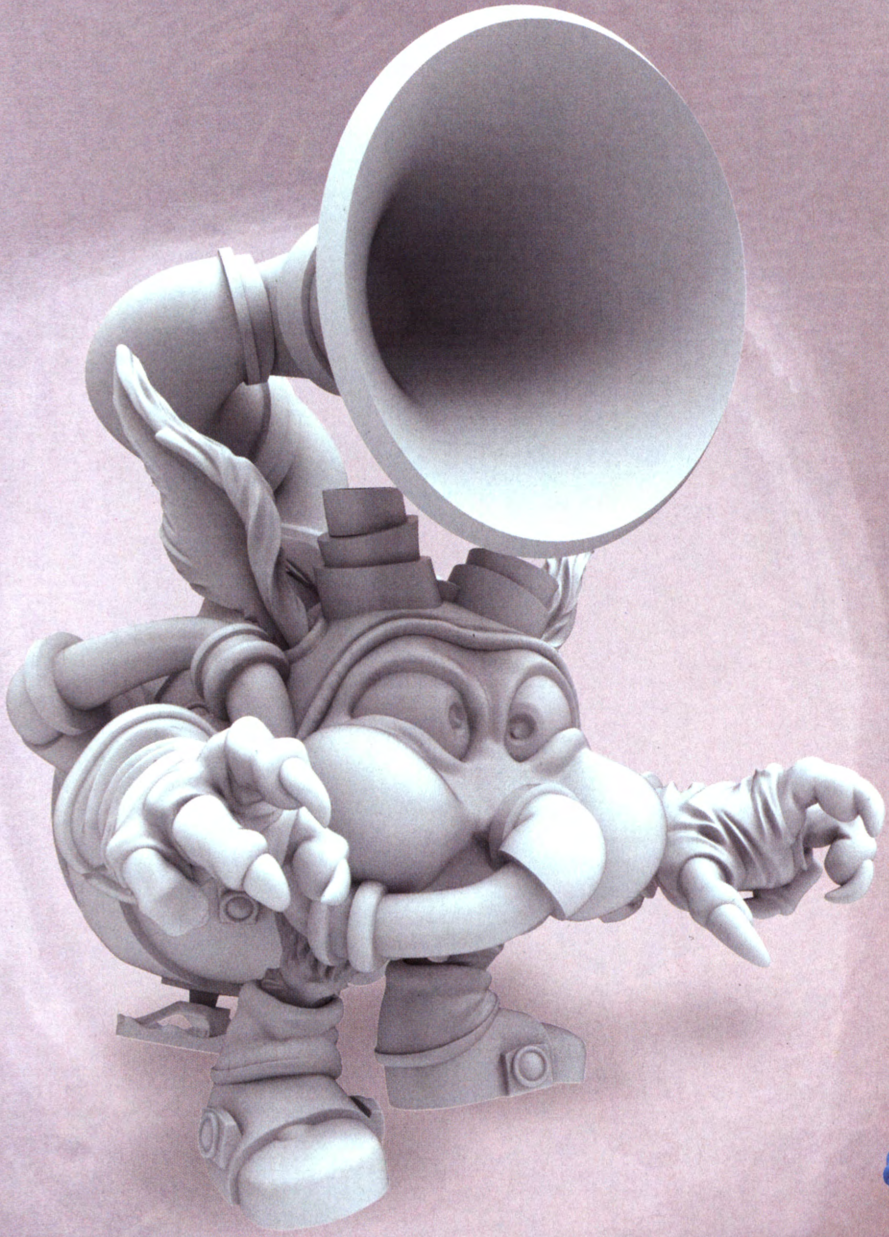


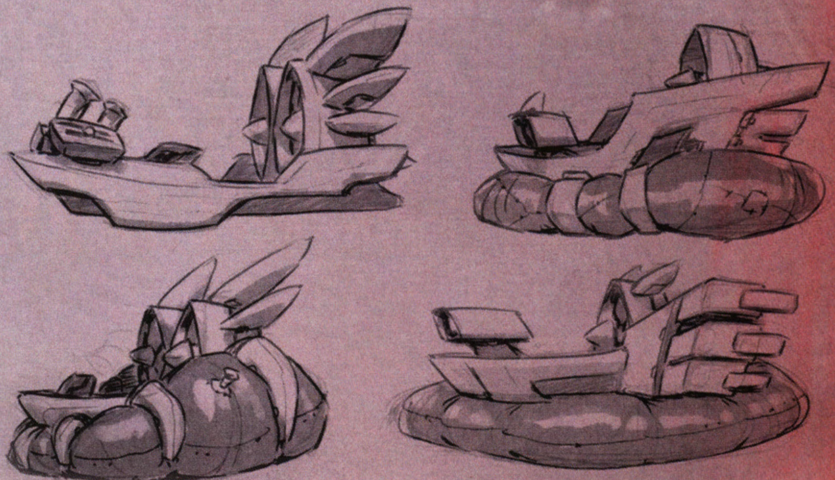


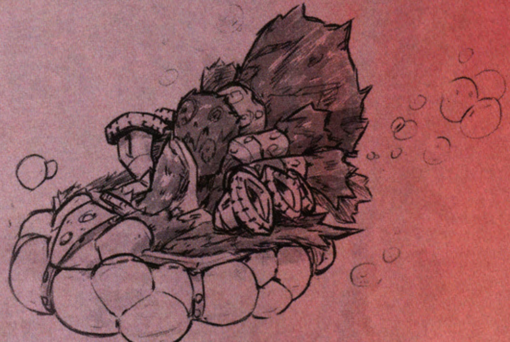


A Cinderella shoe with energy ball wheels?! Only in Skylands.

– Nicholas Ruepp

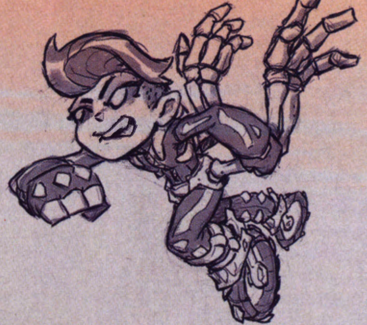


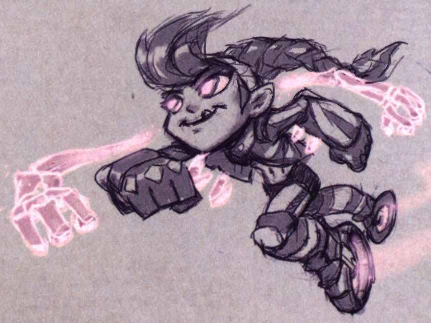


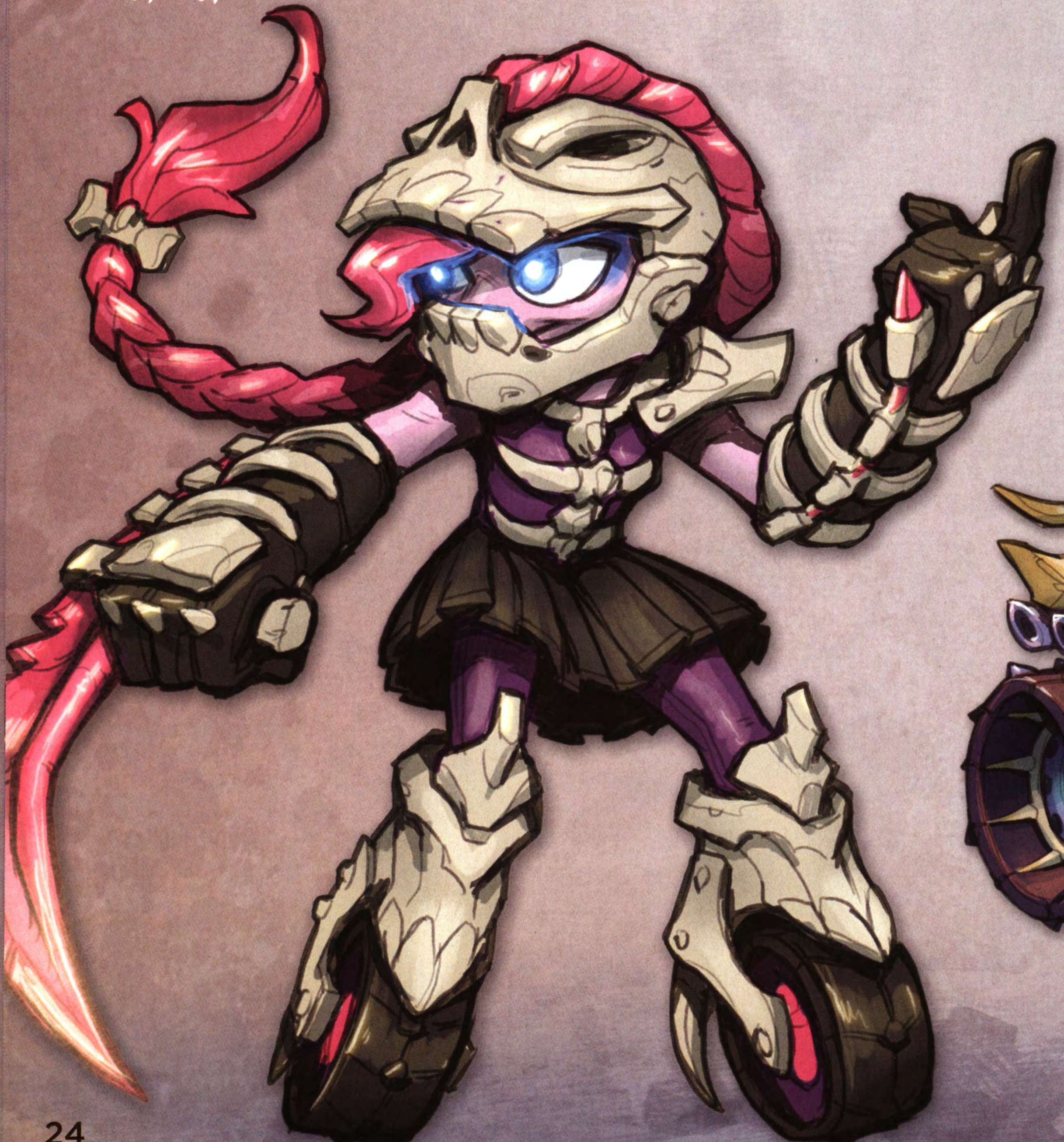


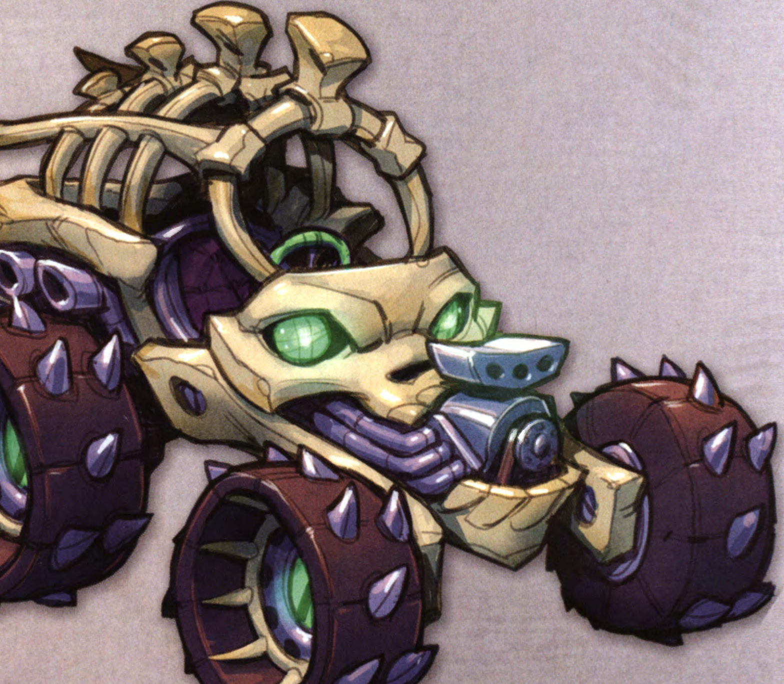
BONE BASH

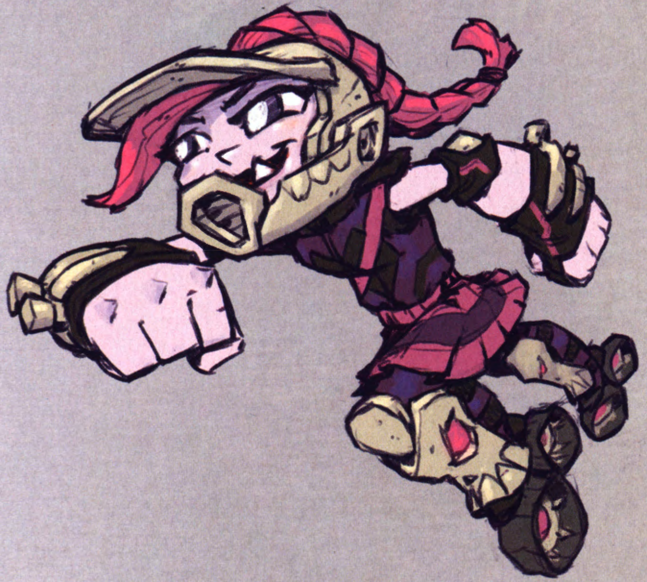
ROLLER BRAWL & TOMB BUGGY

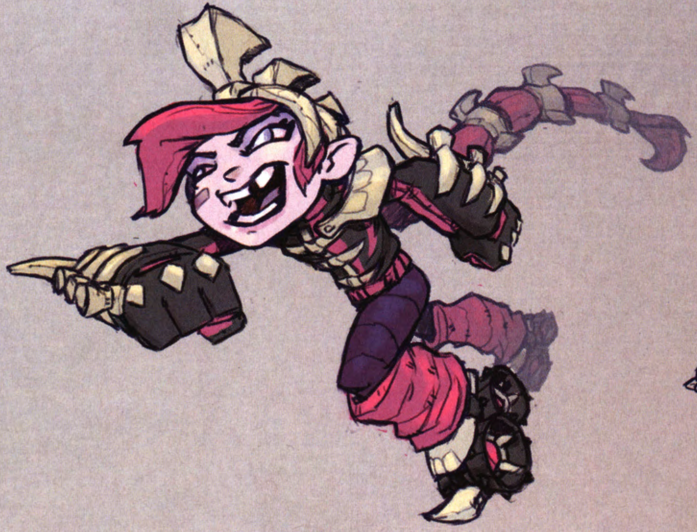


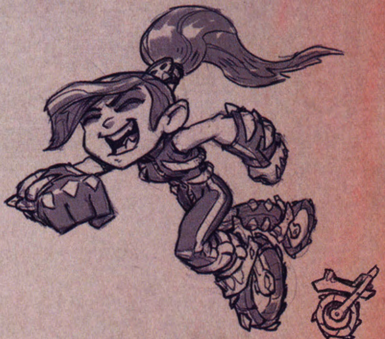






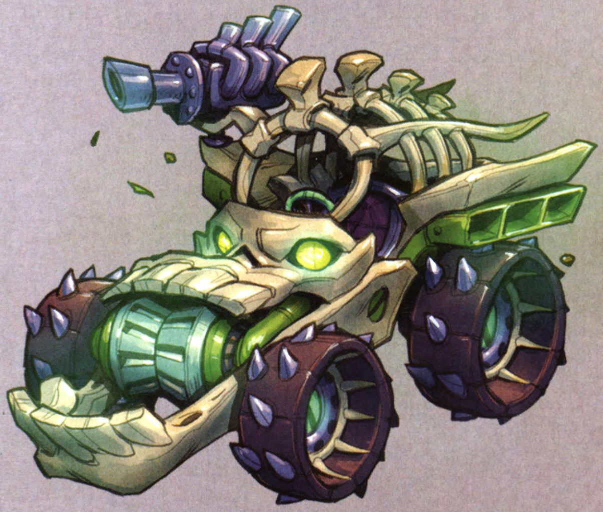


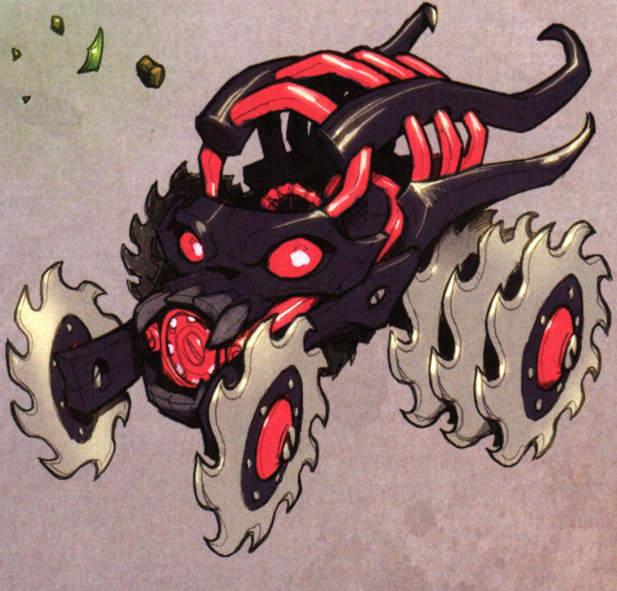


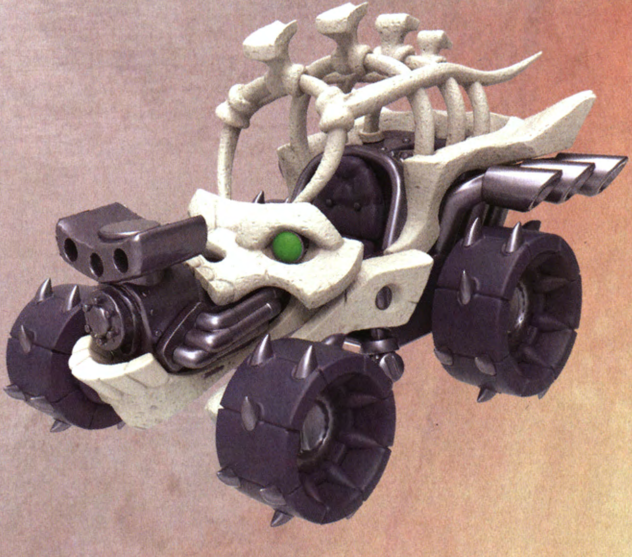


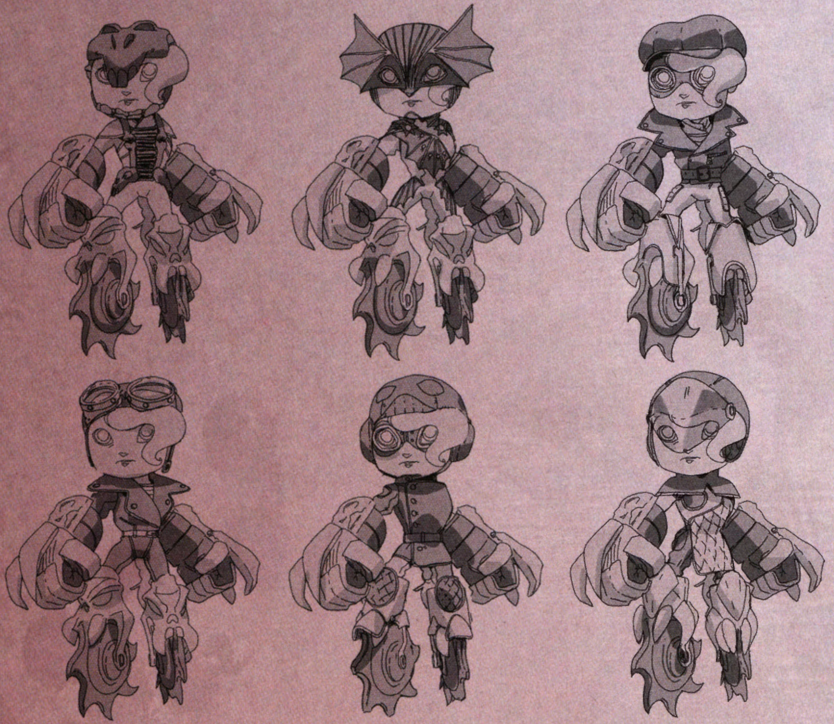
The idea of SuperCharged pairings allowed us to not just have a fleet of Vehicles, but complementary rides for each of our Drivers. I love how they echo each other in color and detailing.

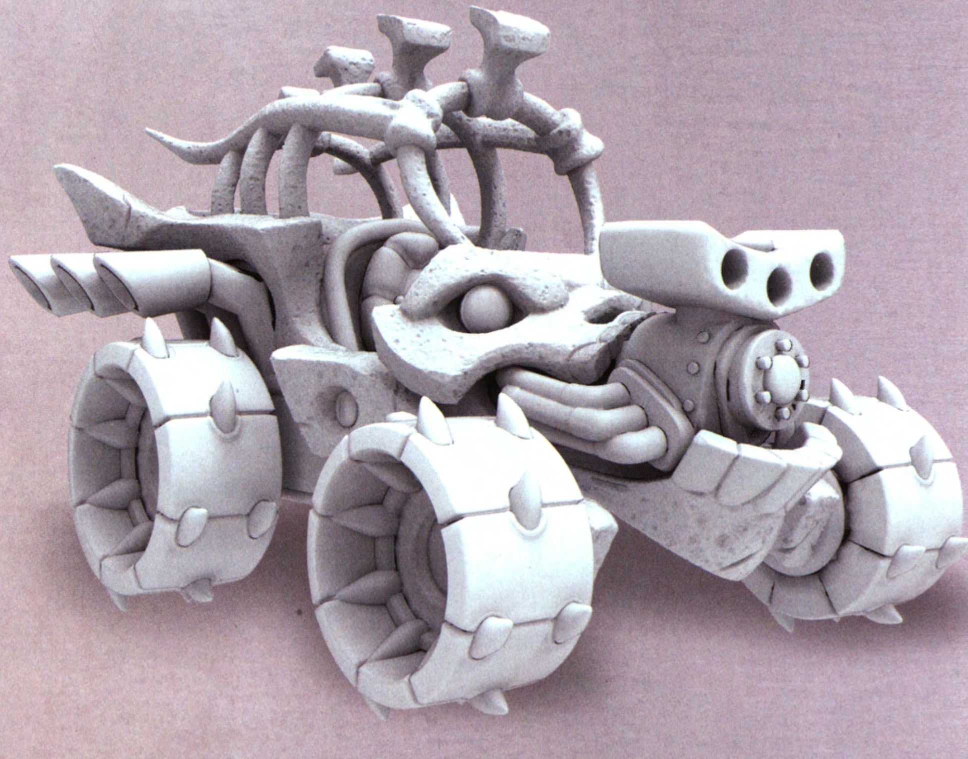
– David A. Rodriguez

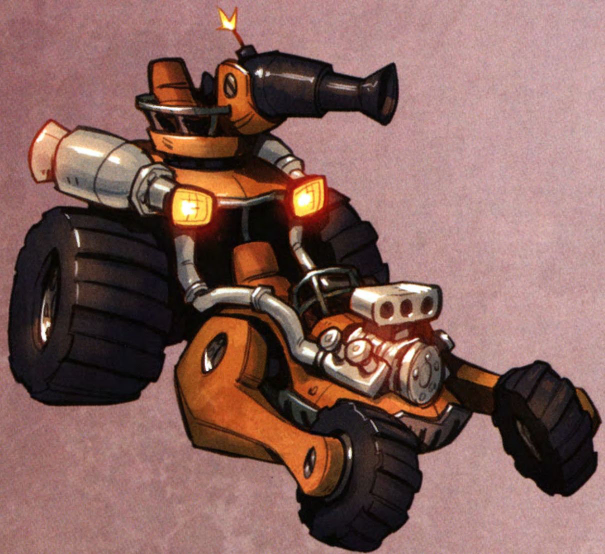


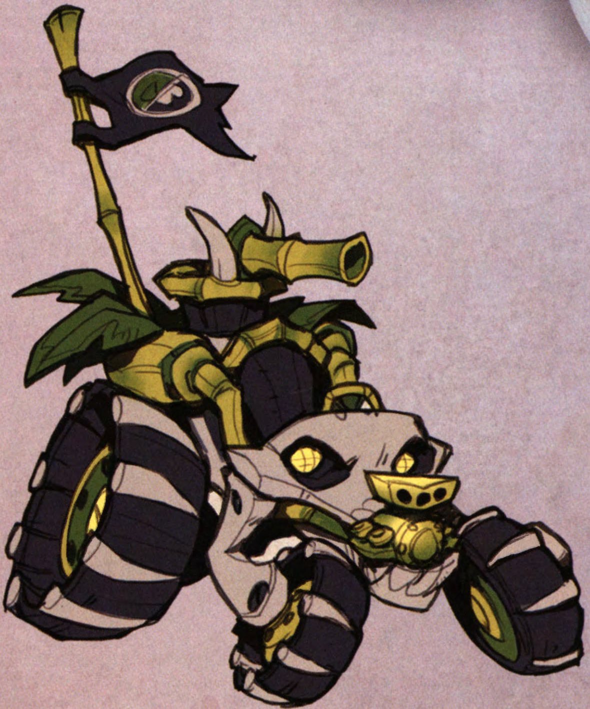






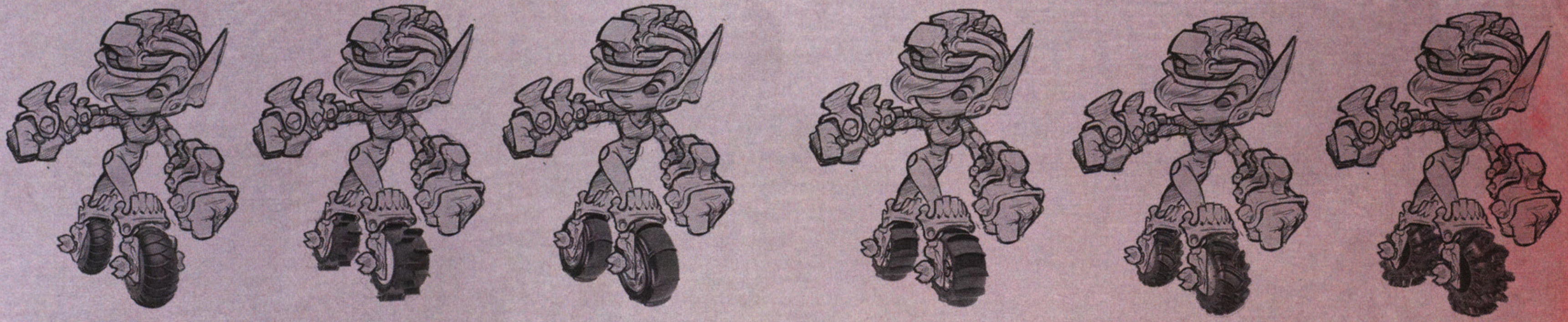




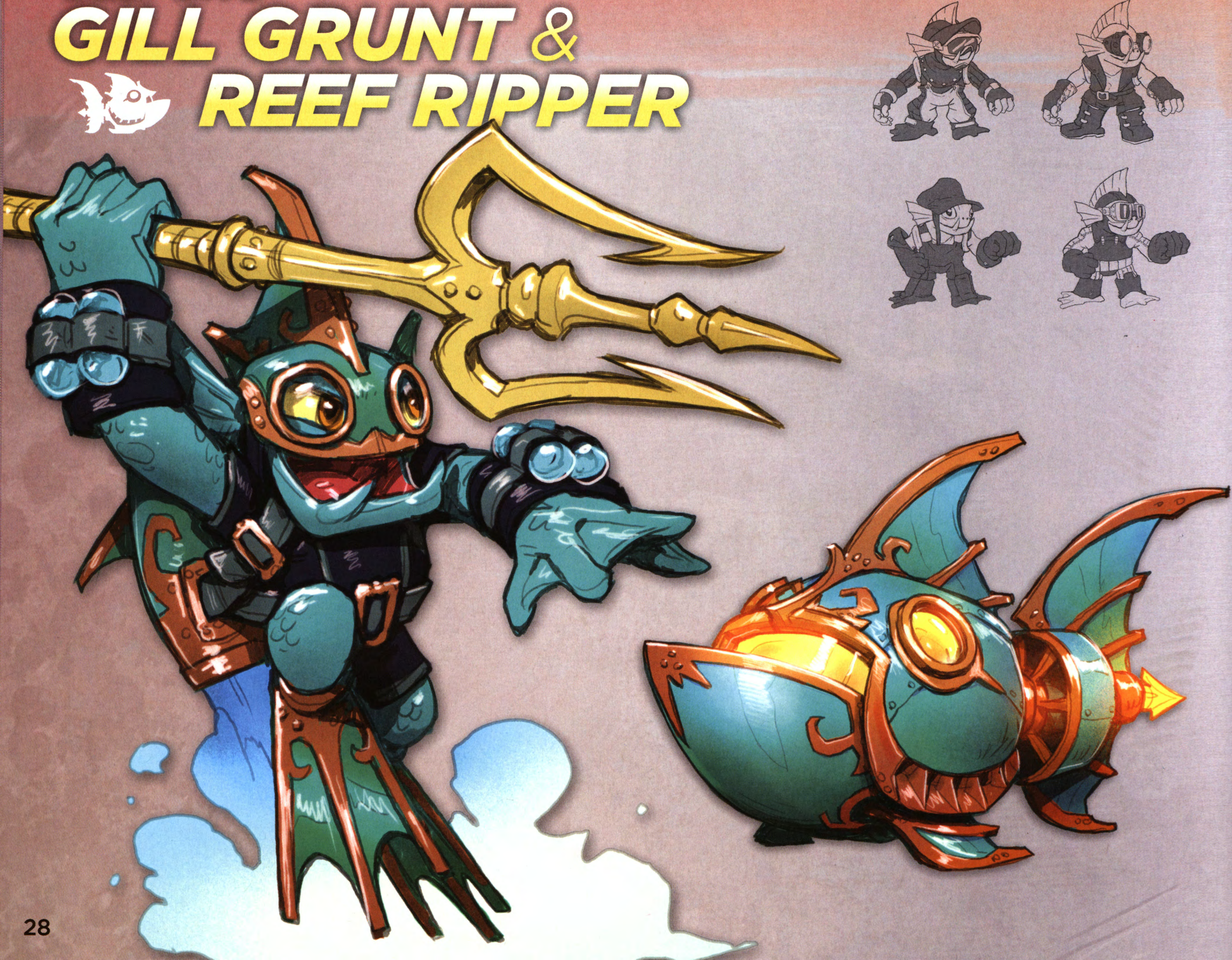


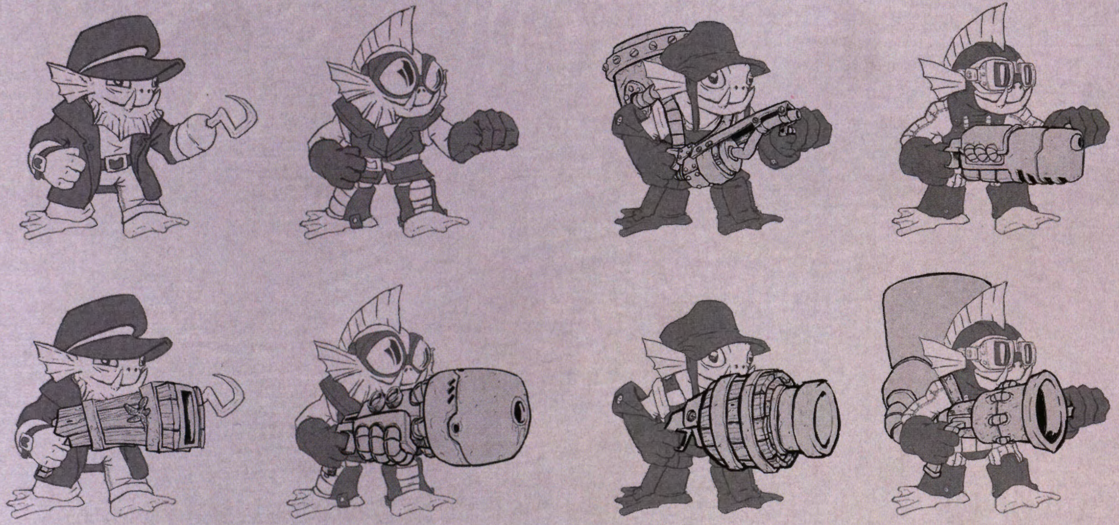
The vehicle that would become Roller Brawl's started out as our earliest vehicle prototype!

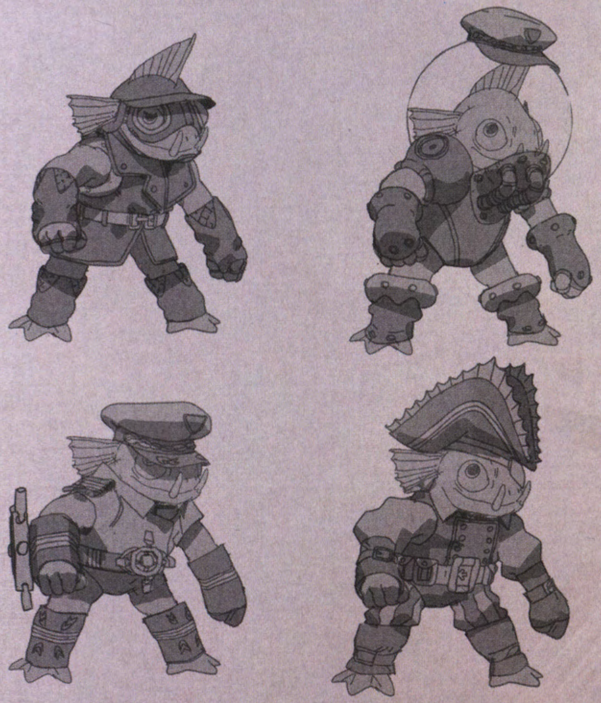
– Rob Gallerani

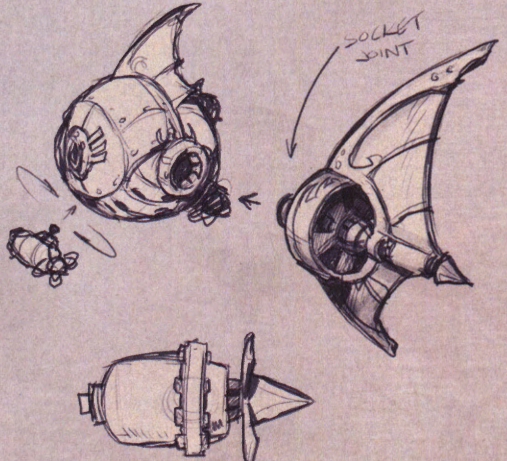


DEEP DIVE
GILL GRUNT & REEF RIPPER







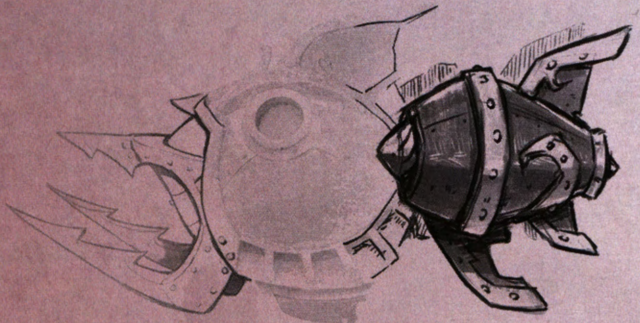

SOCKET JOINT

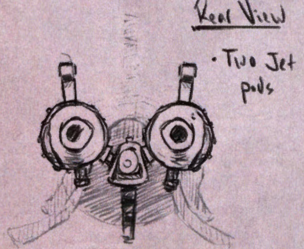
Did you know that every Skylanders game has had a new version of Gill Grunt?

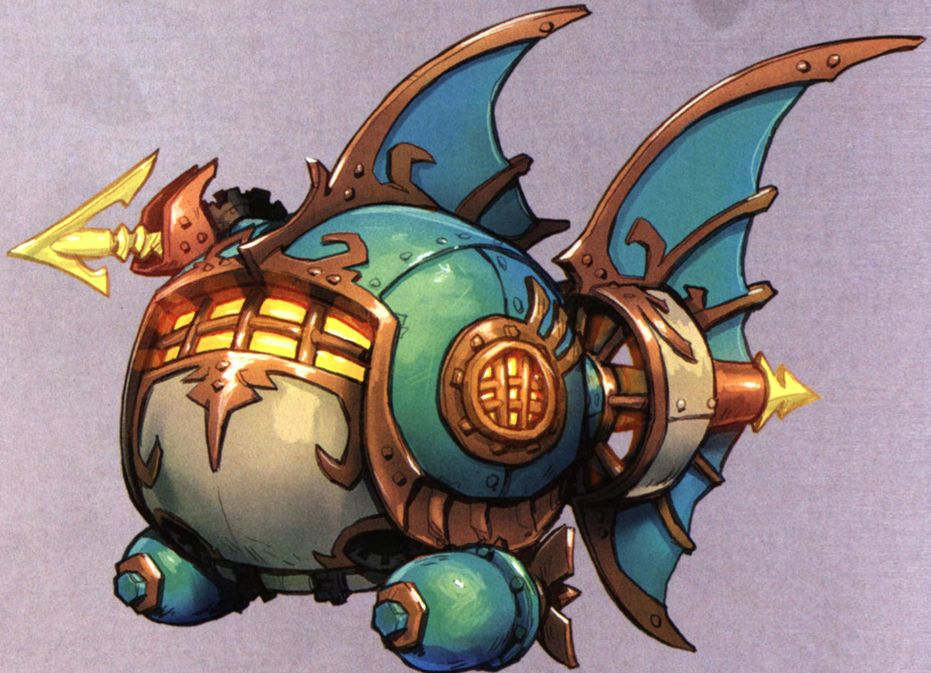
– Curtis Orr

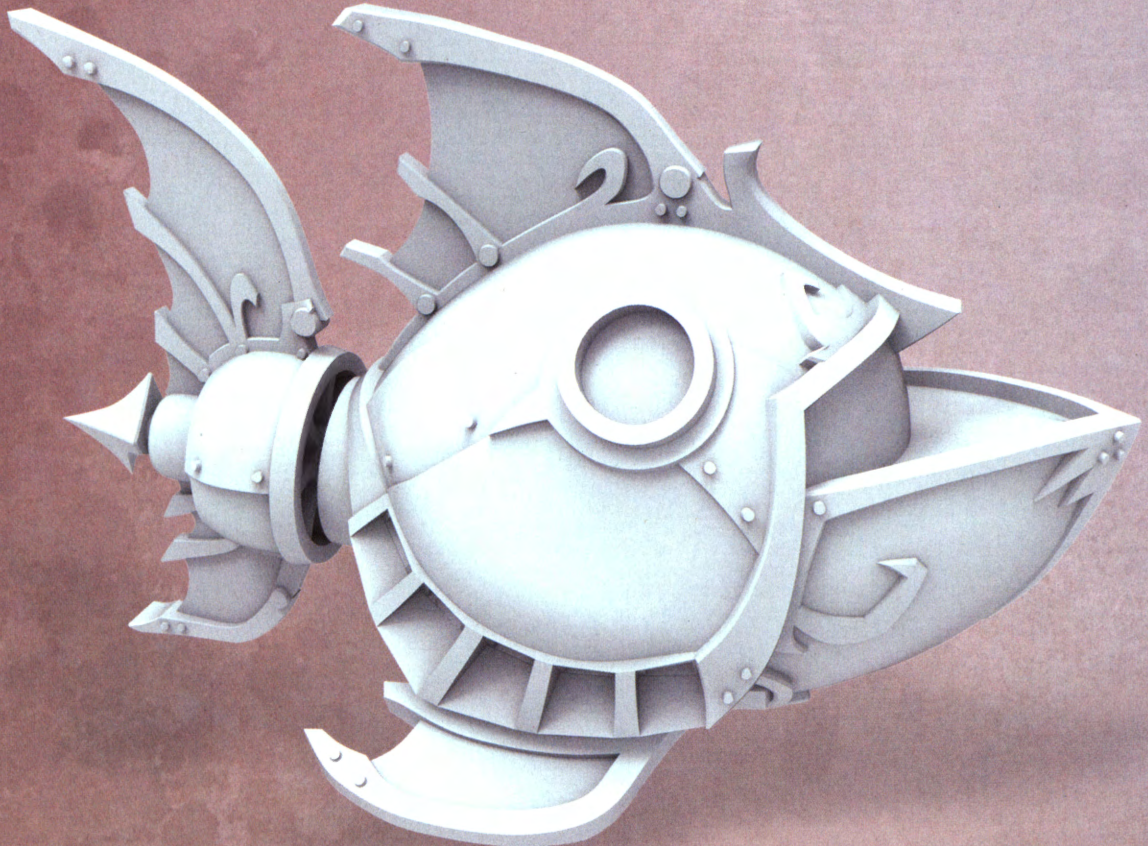
The Reef Ripper is my favorite vehicle.
I love its lines and the Jules Verne-like trim.

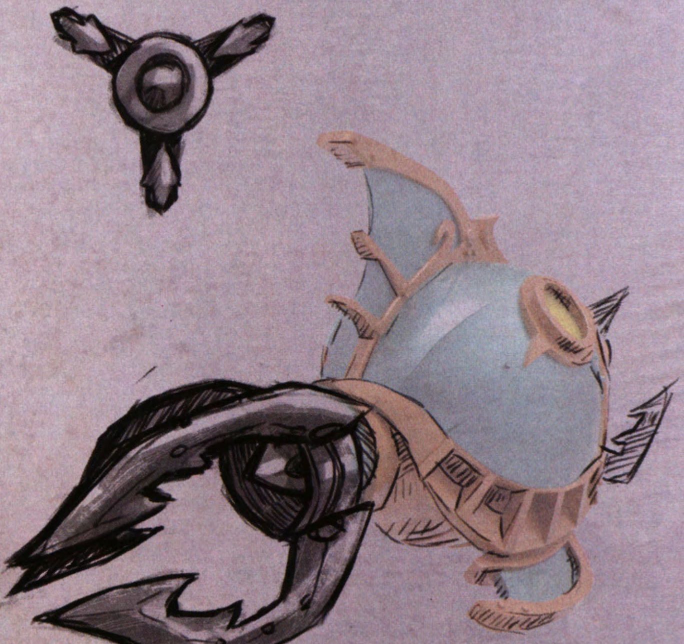
– Stephen Moss

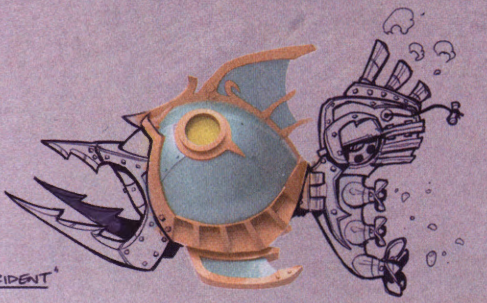



Rear View
· Two Jet pods

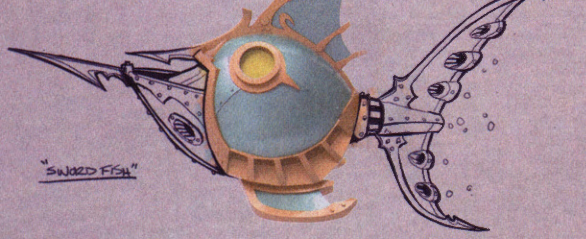




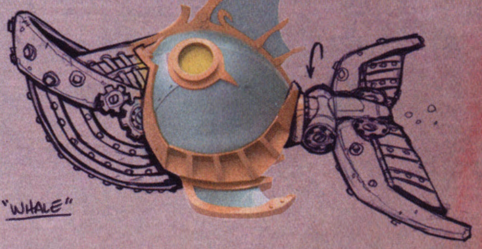




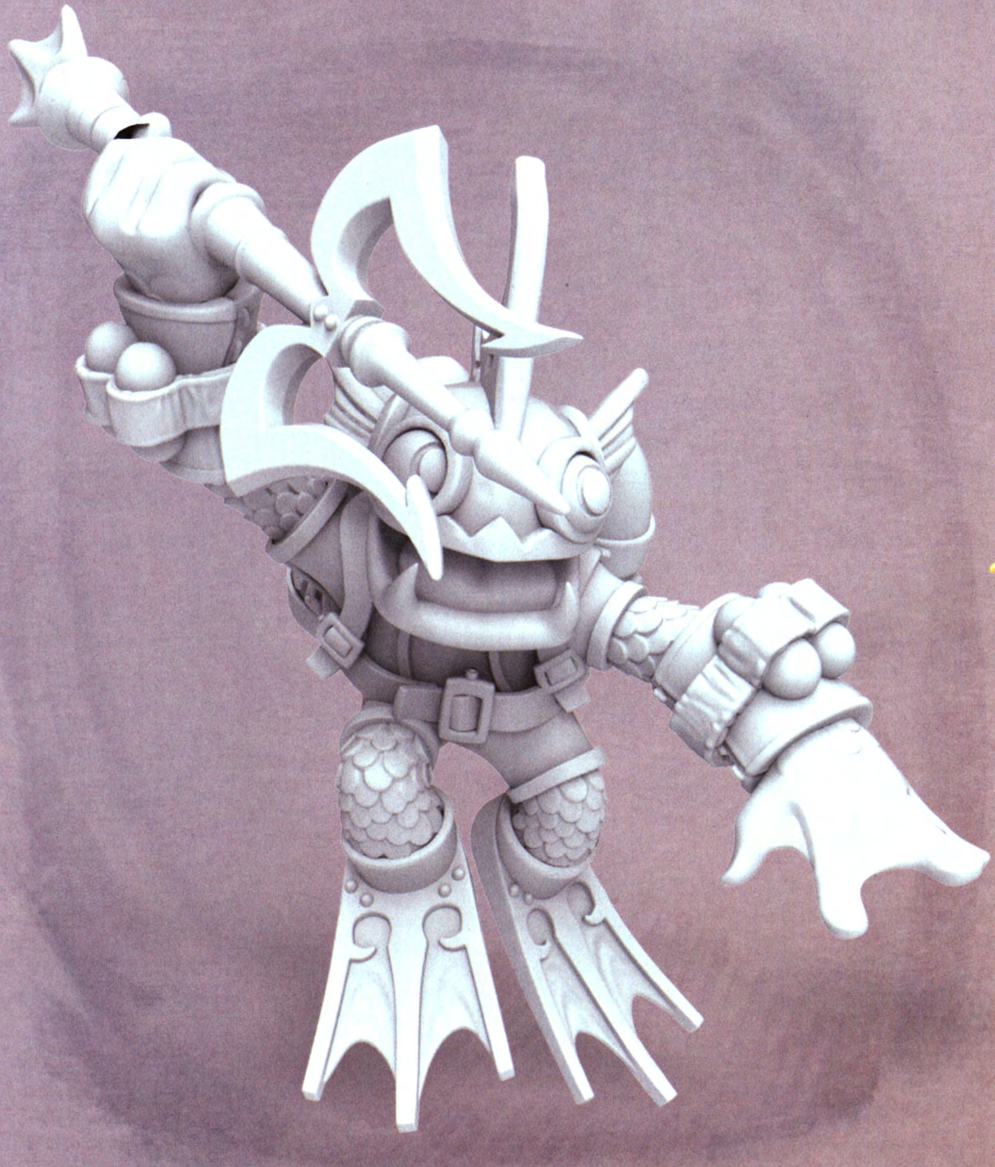
"TRIDENT"

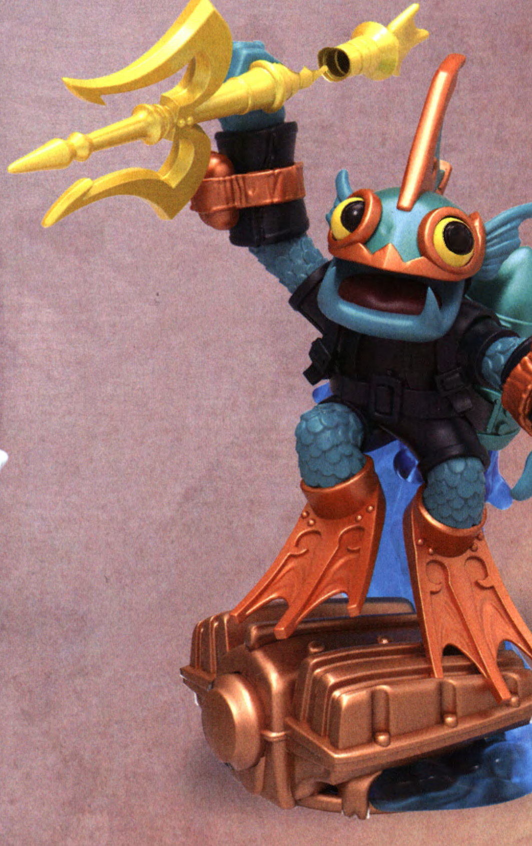


"SWORD FISH"

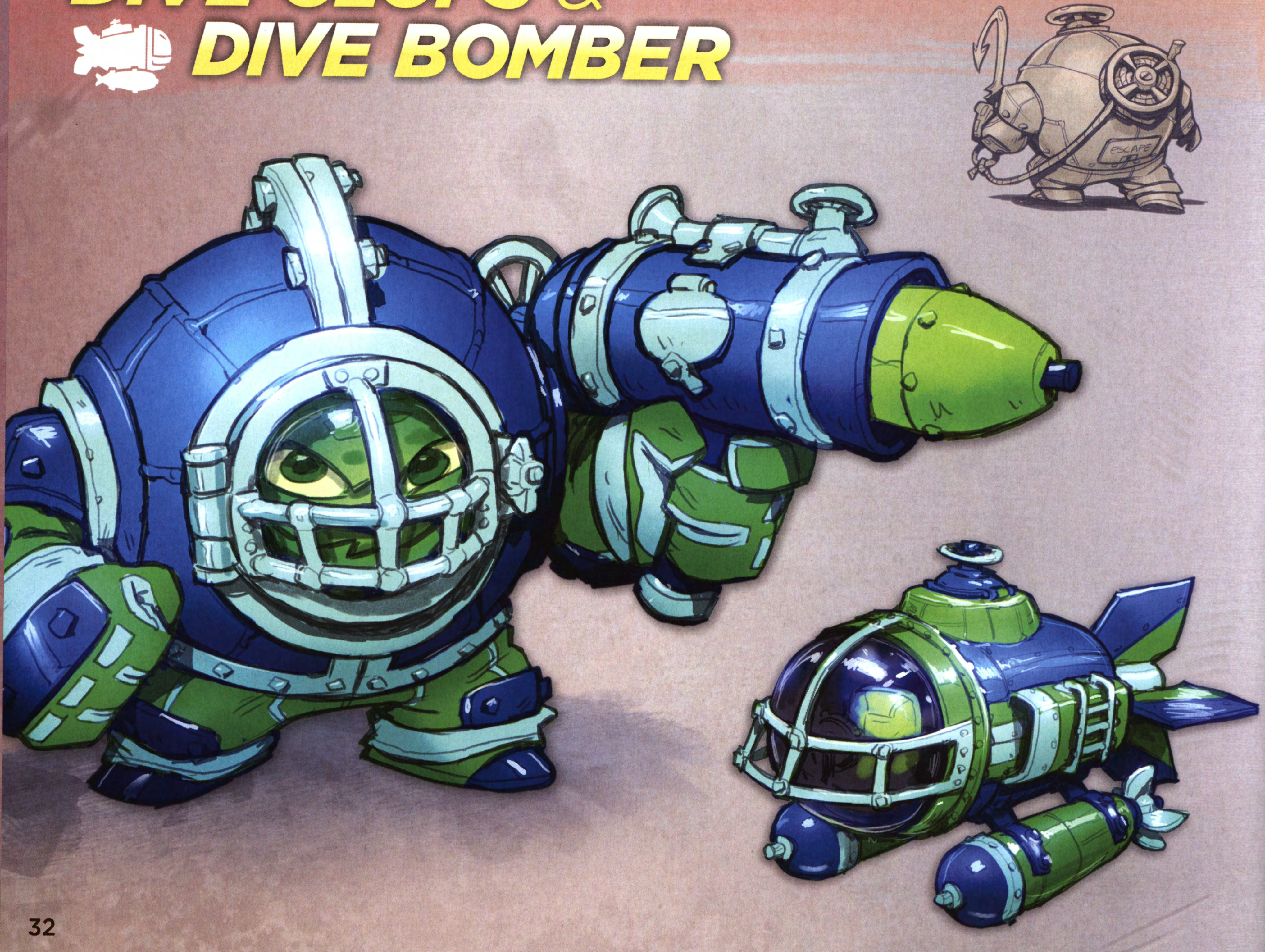


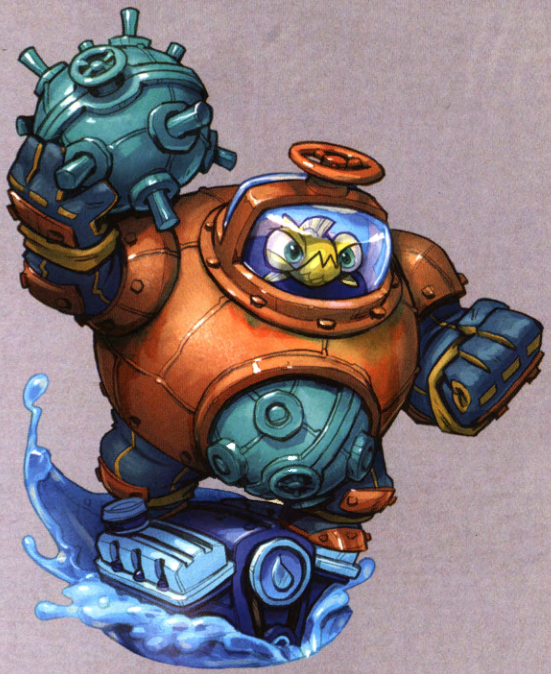
"WHALE"

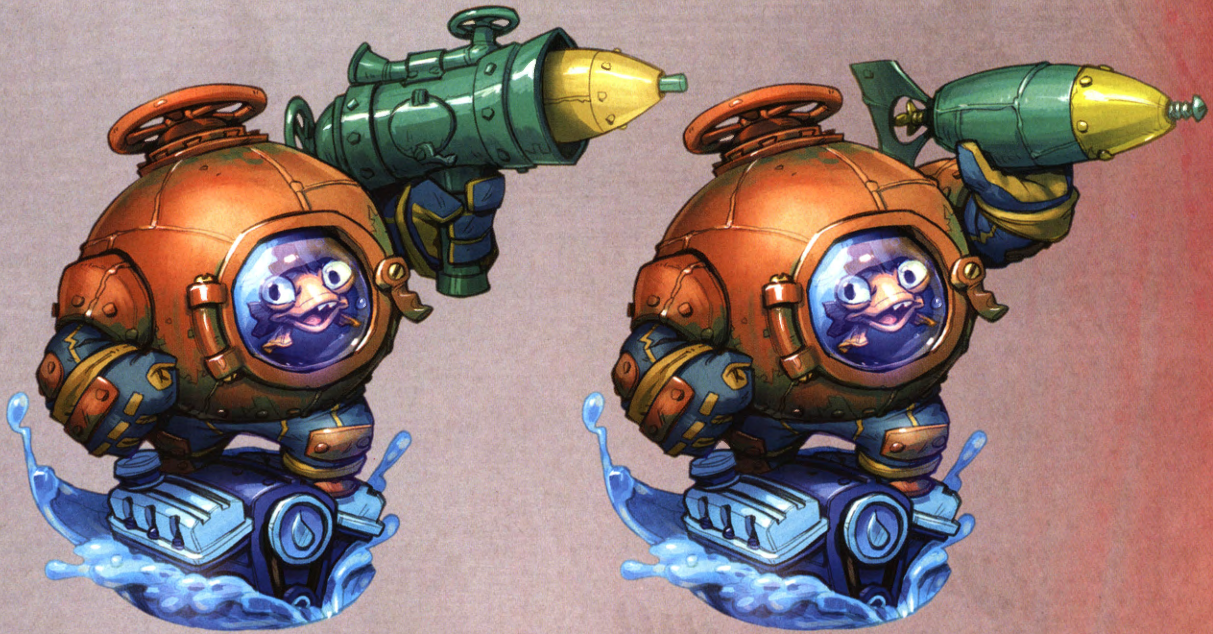


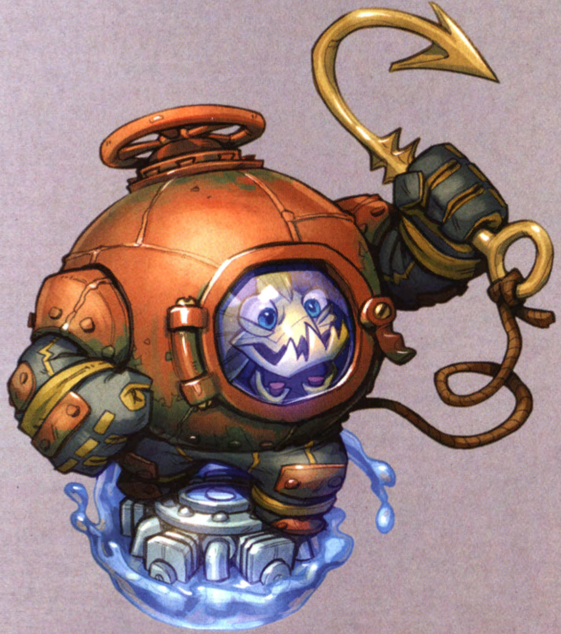


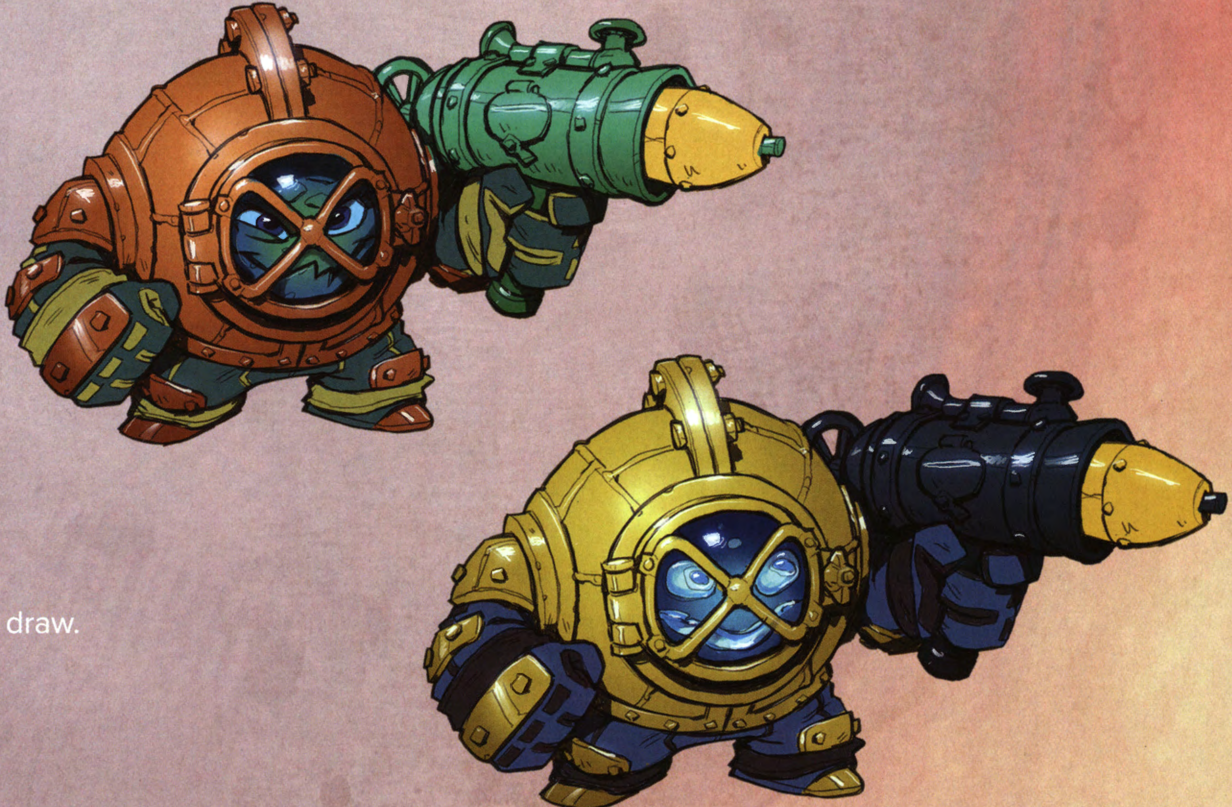
DIVE CLOPS & DIVE BOMBER





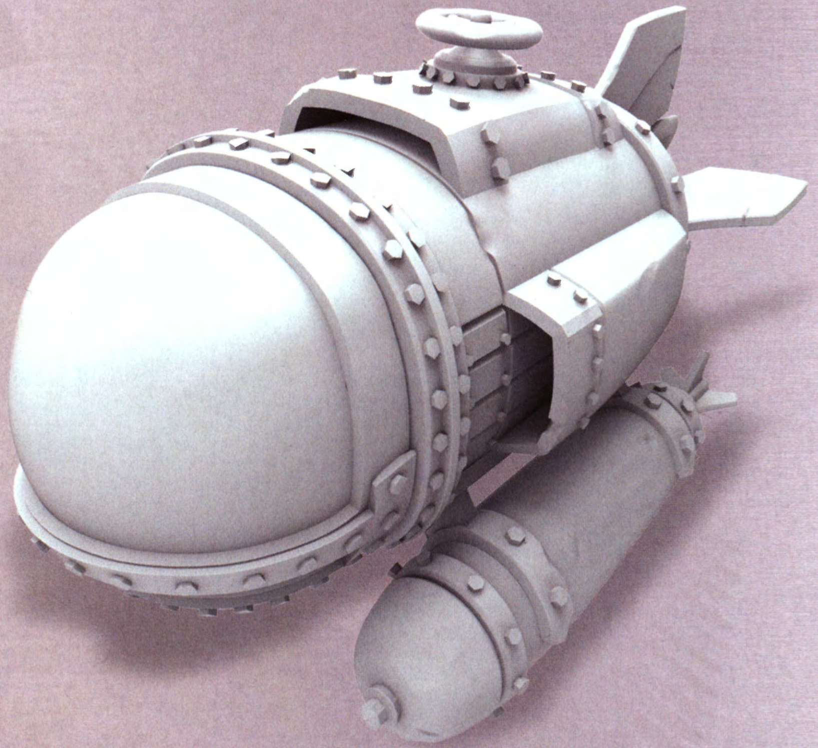


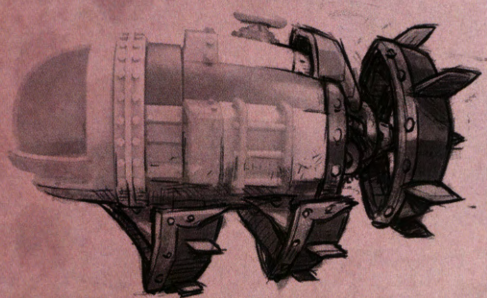


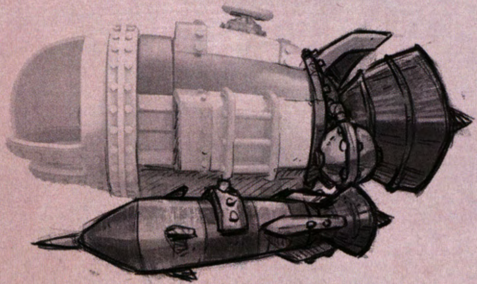


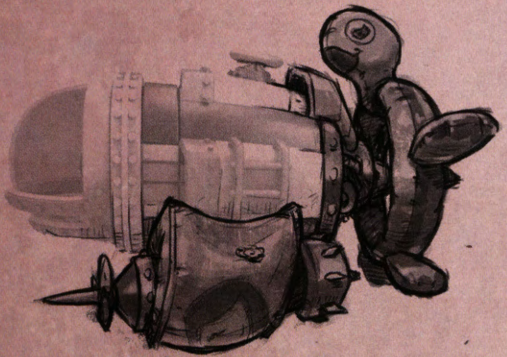
I wish I could draw.

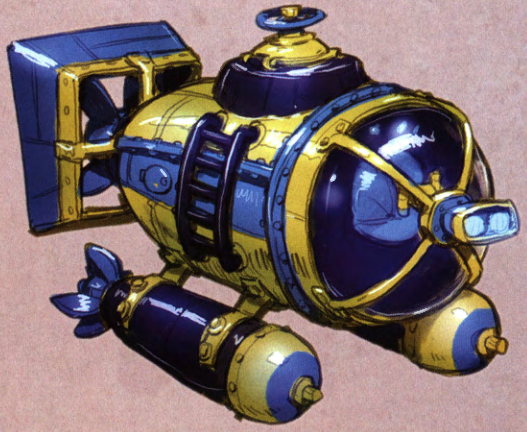
– Matt Bishop

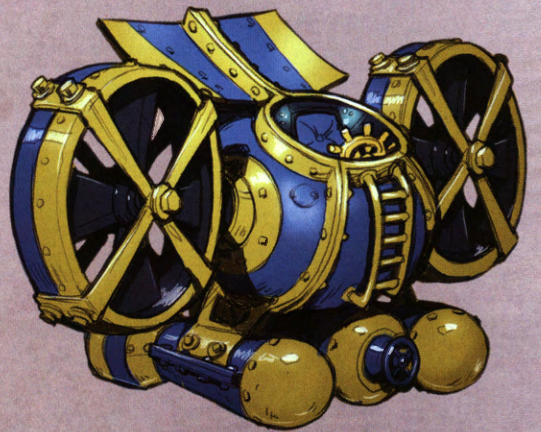






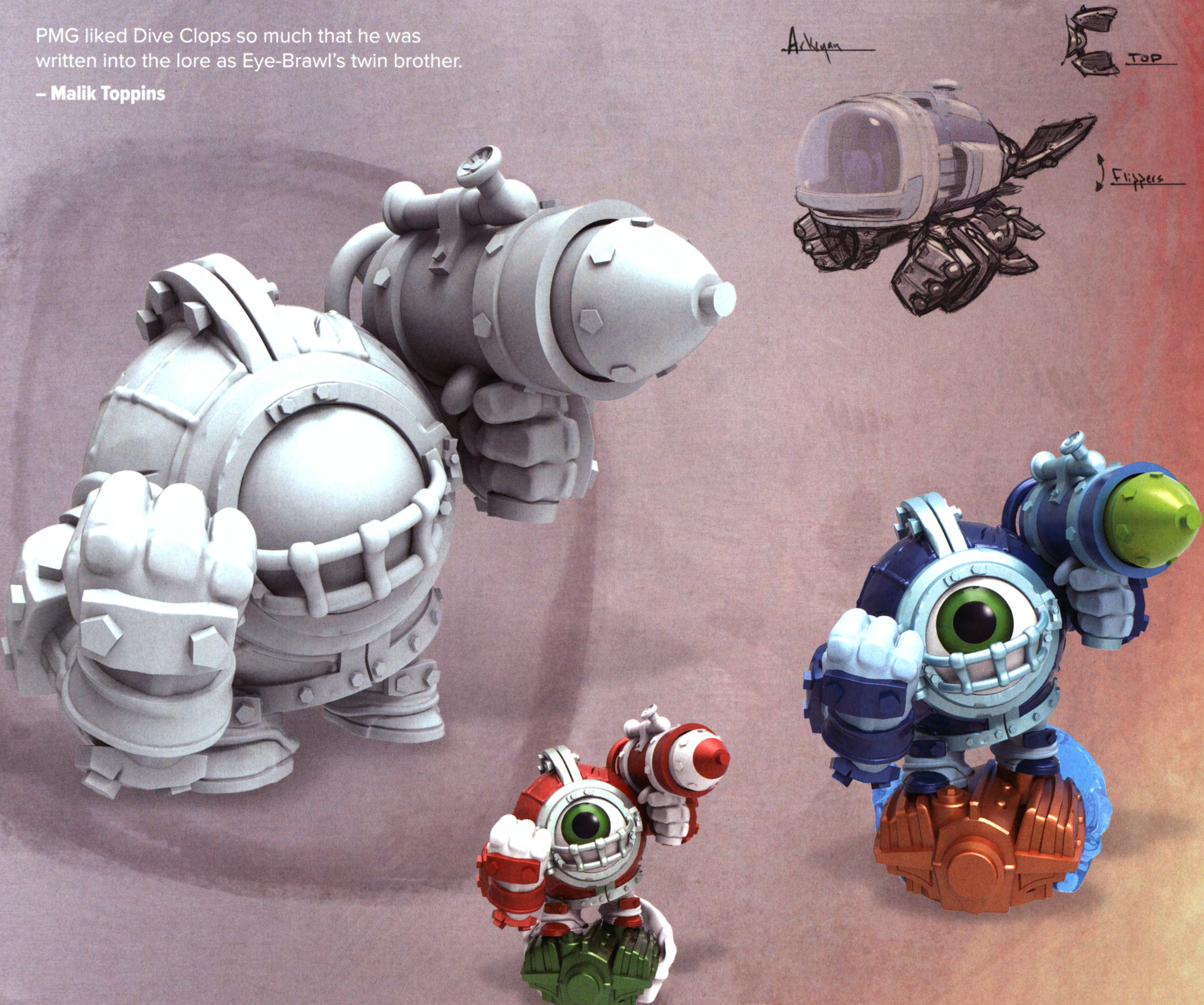






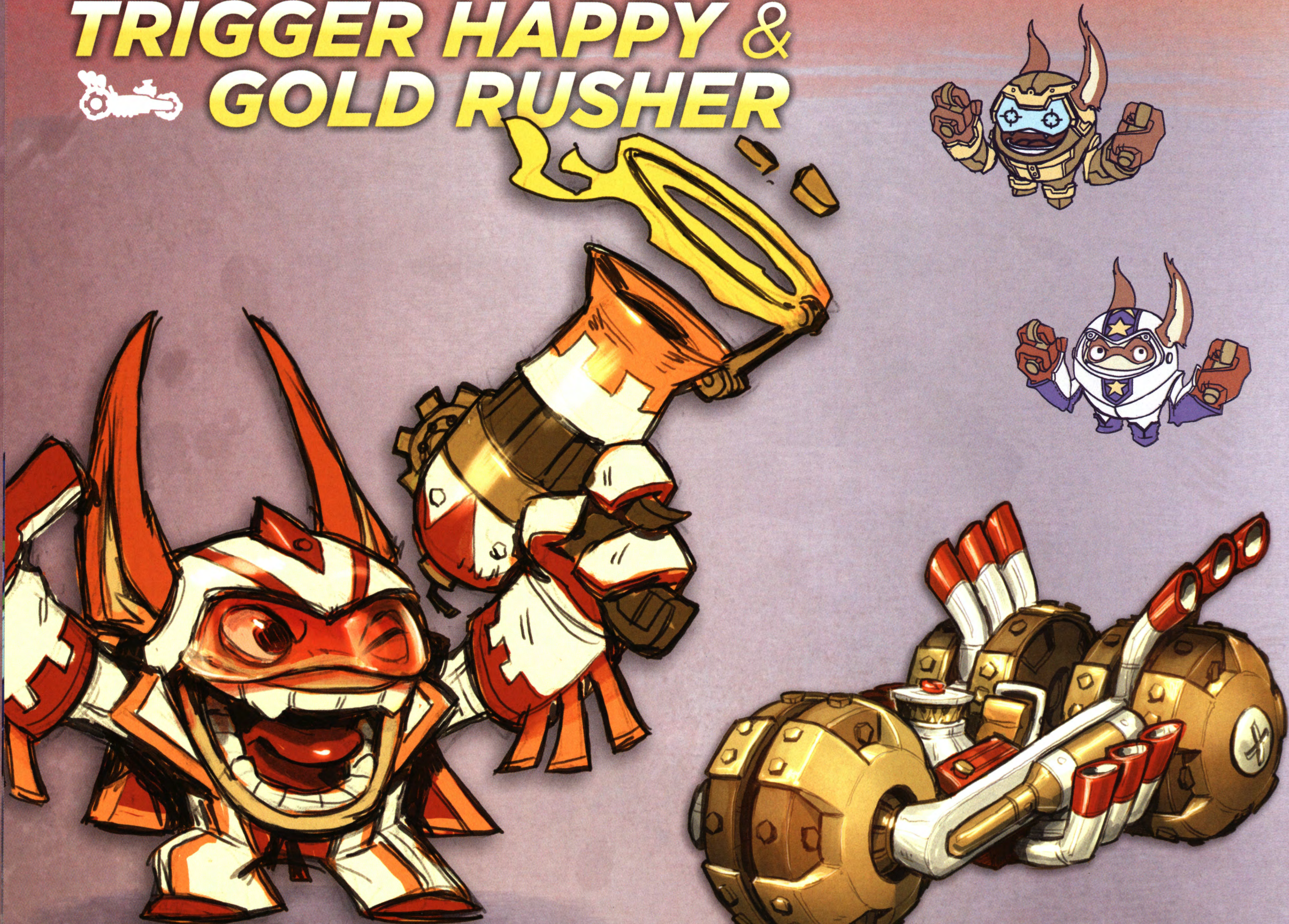
PMG liked Dive Clops so much that he was written into the lore as Eye-Brawl's twin brother.

– Malik Toppins


Arkeyan
Top
Flippers

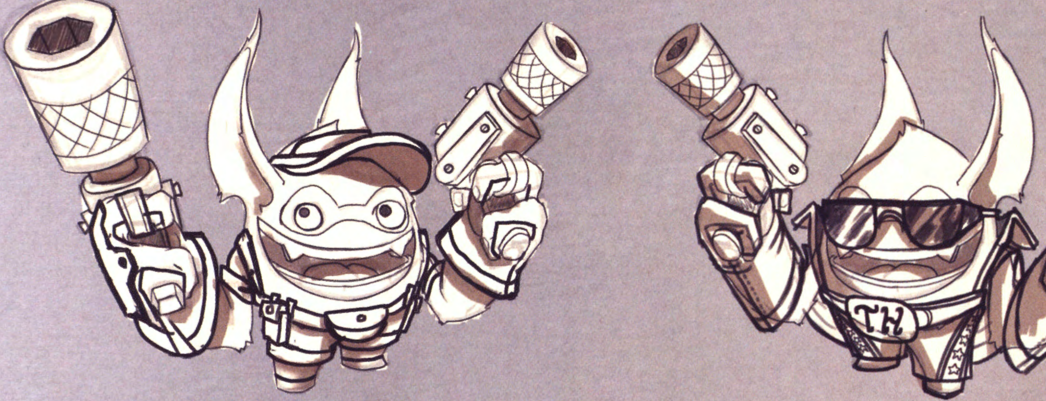
DOUBLE DARE

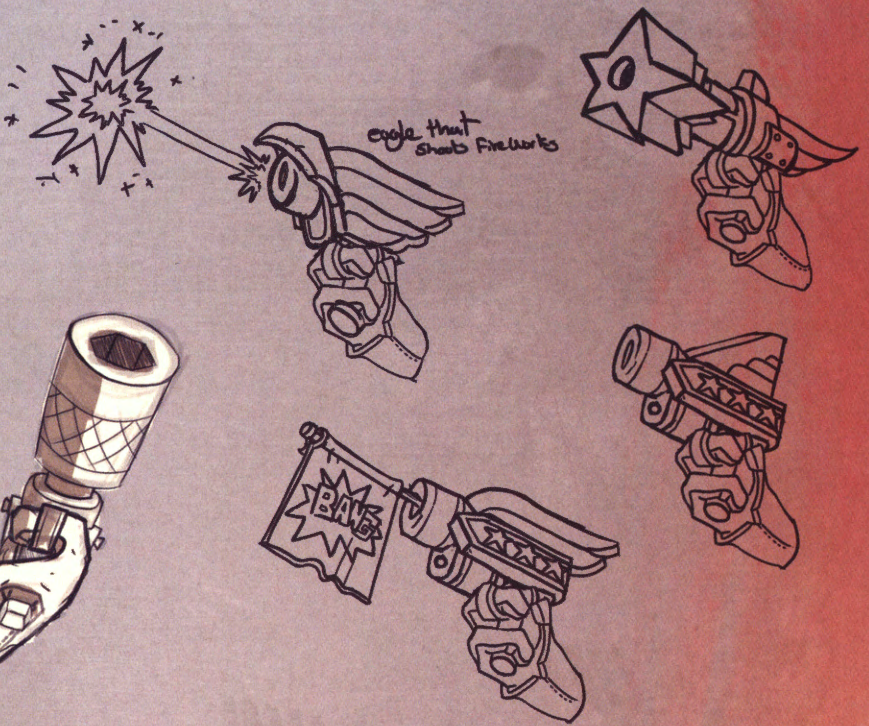
TRIGGER HAPPY & GOLD RUSHER

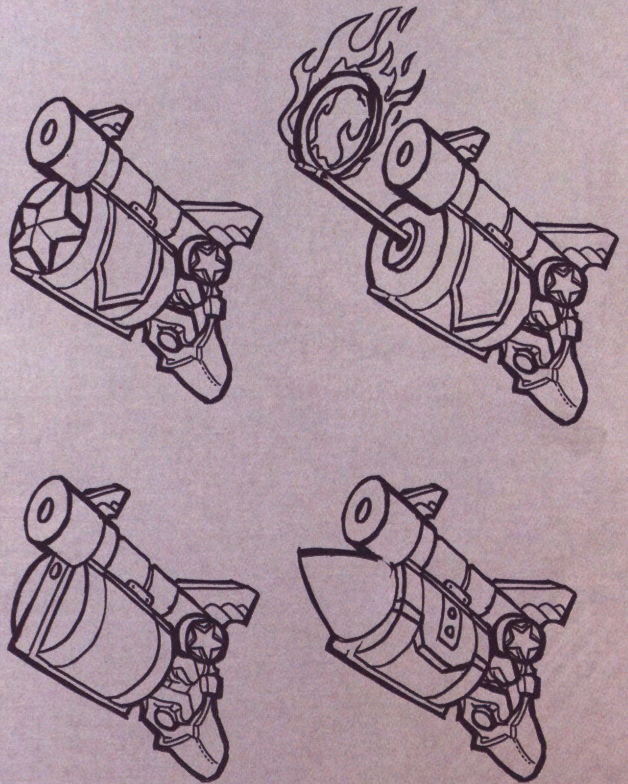


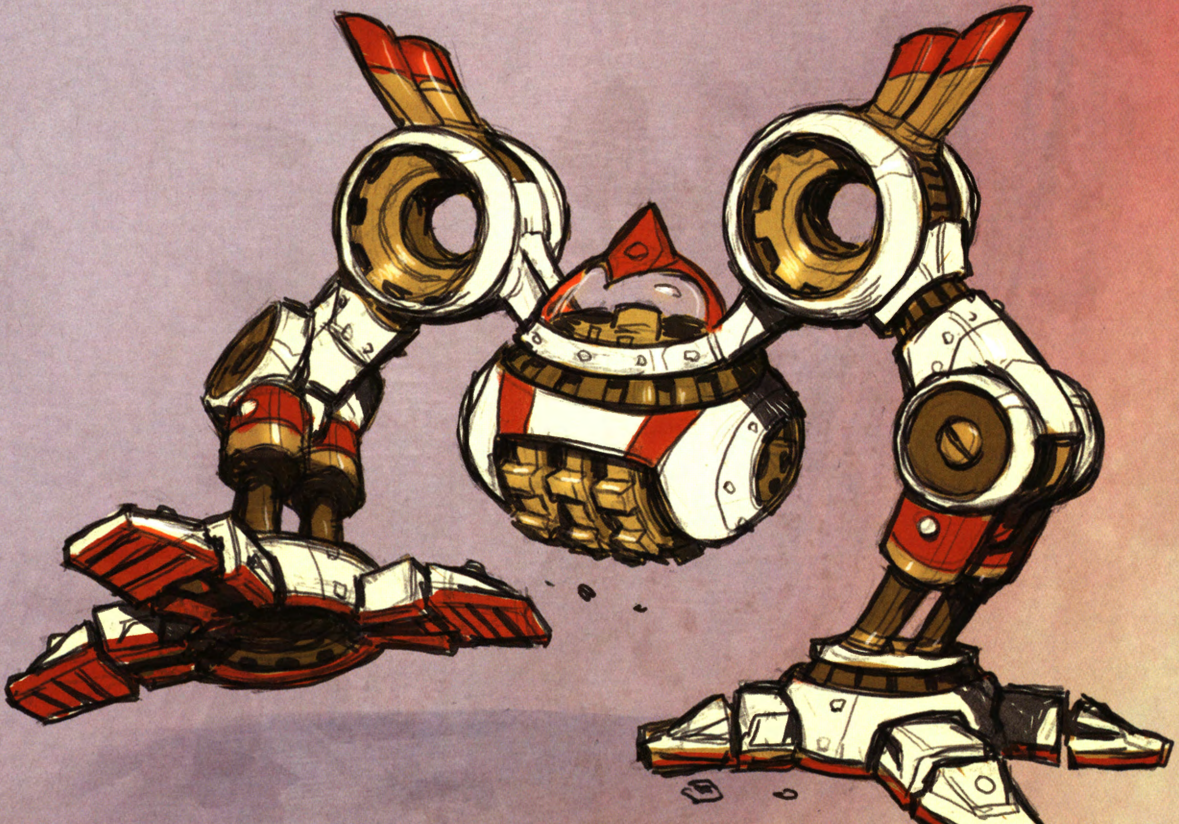
SuperChargers is the first game to reimagine Skylanders rather than reposing them.

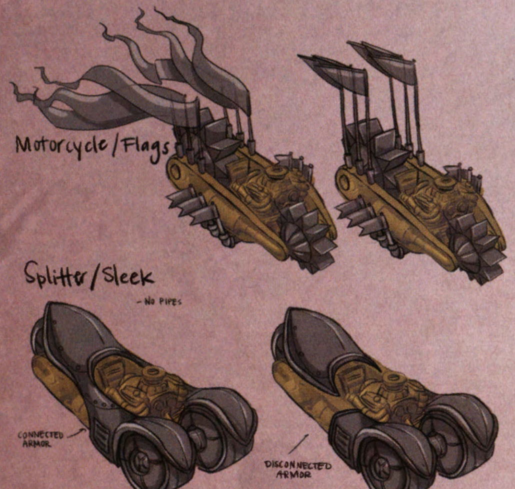
– Brock Cerny

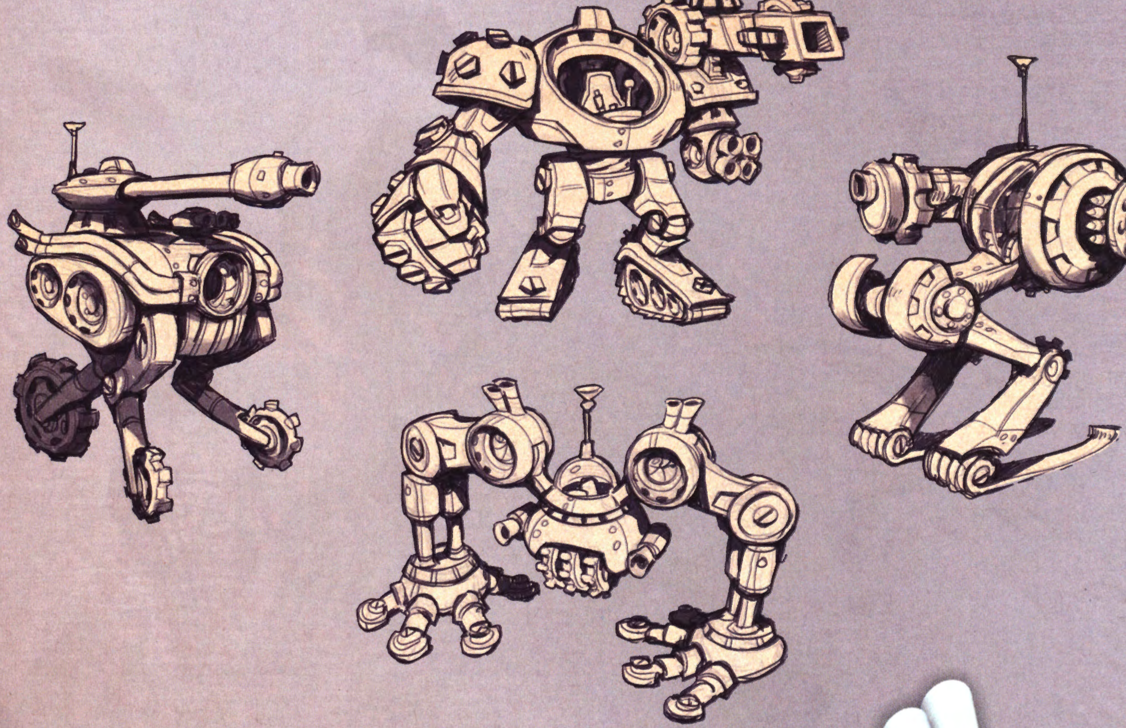


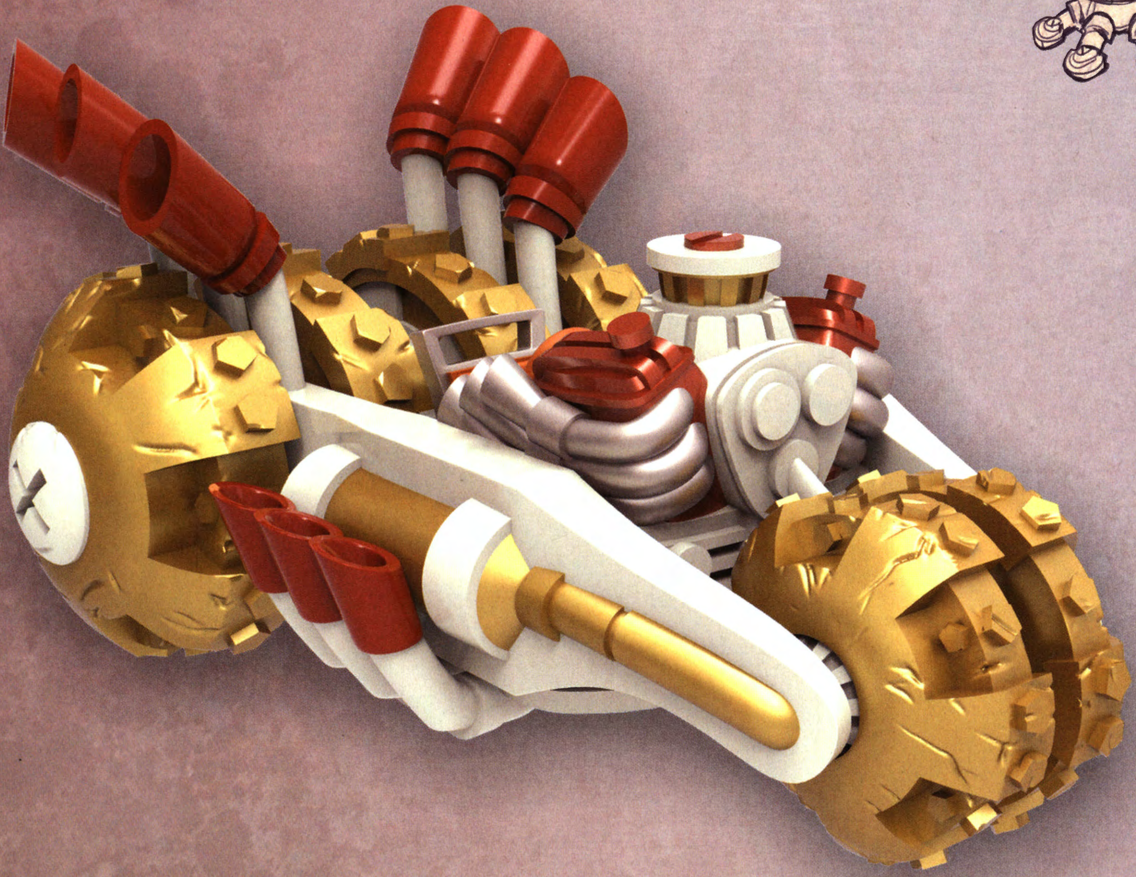

eagle that shoots Fireworks
BANG

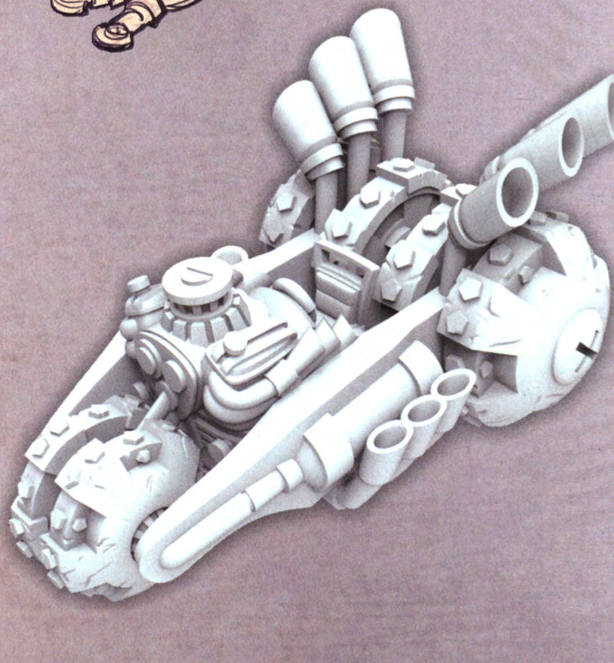





Motorcycle/Flags
Splitter/Sleek
- NO PIPES
CONNECTED ARMOR
DISCONNECTED ARMOR

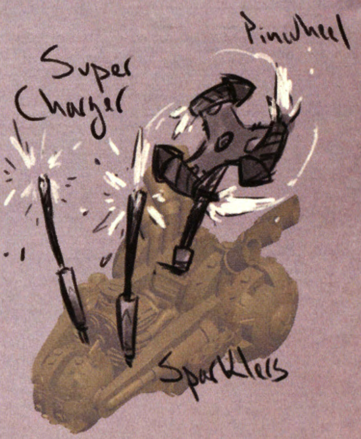


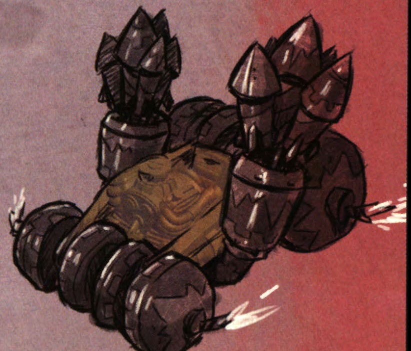


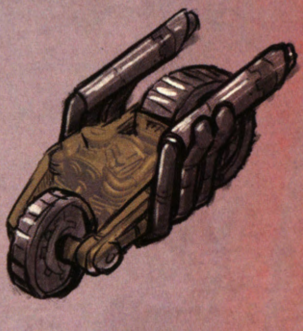


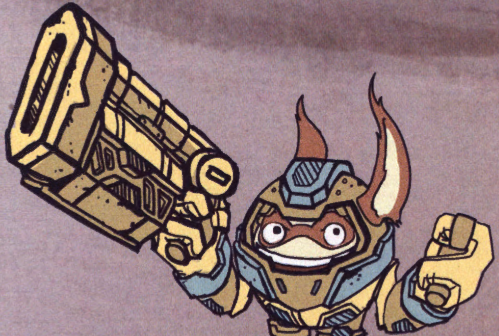
Very few characters have less regard for their own safety than Trigger Happy. So, of course, he's a daredevil.

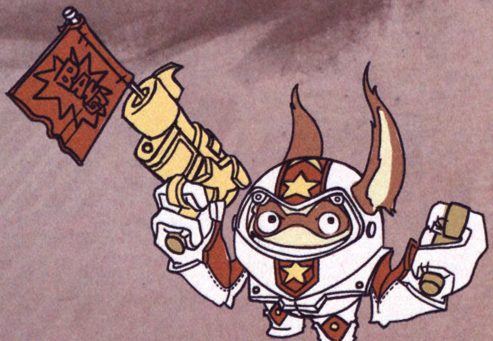
– Matt Helsom


Super Charger
Pinwheel
Sparklers

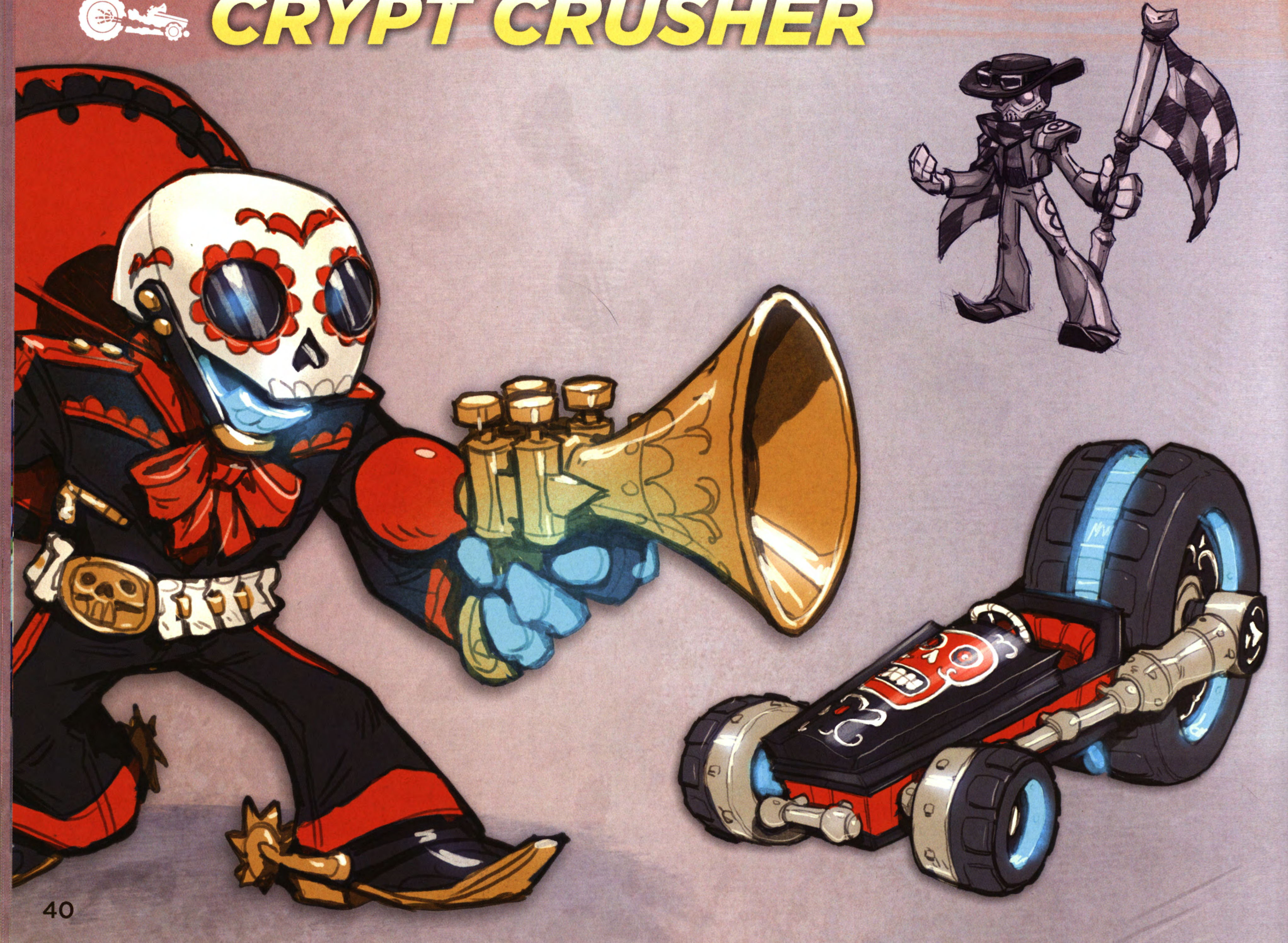


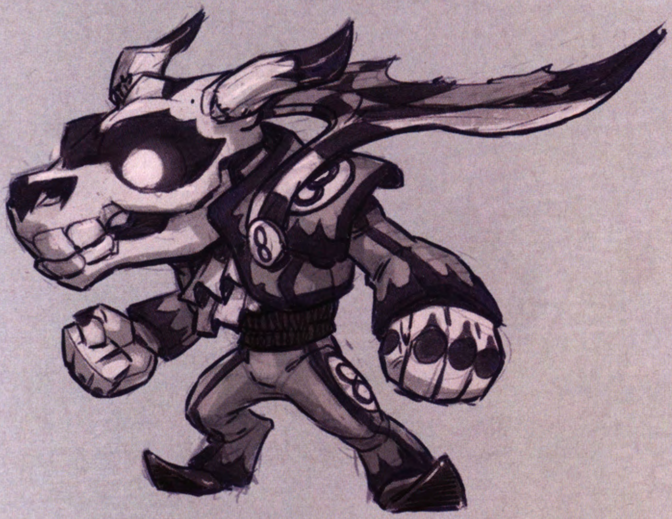


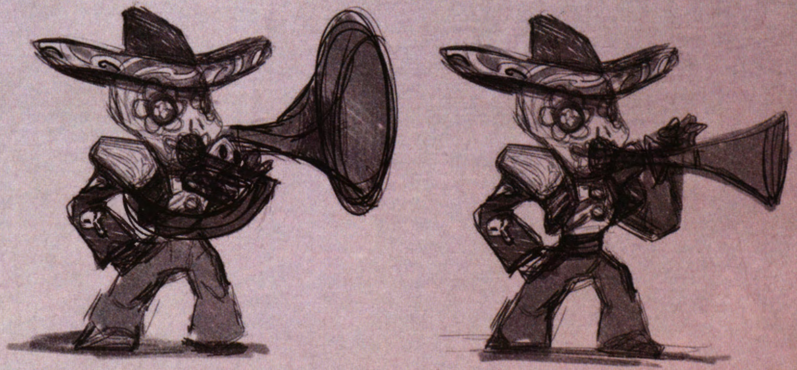




FIESTA & CRYPT CRUSHER

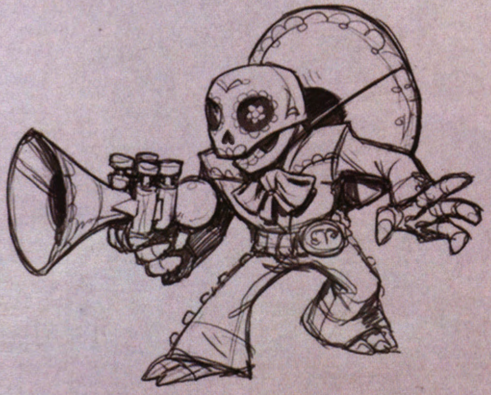


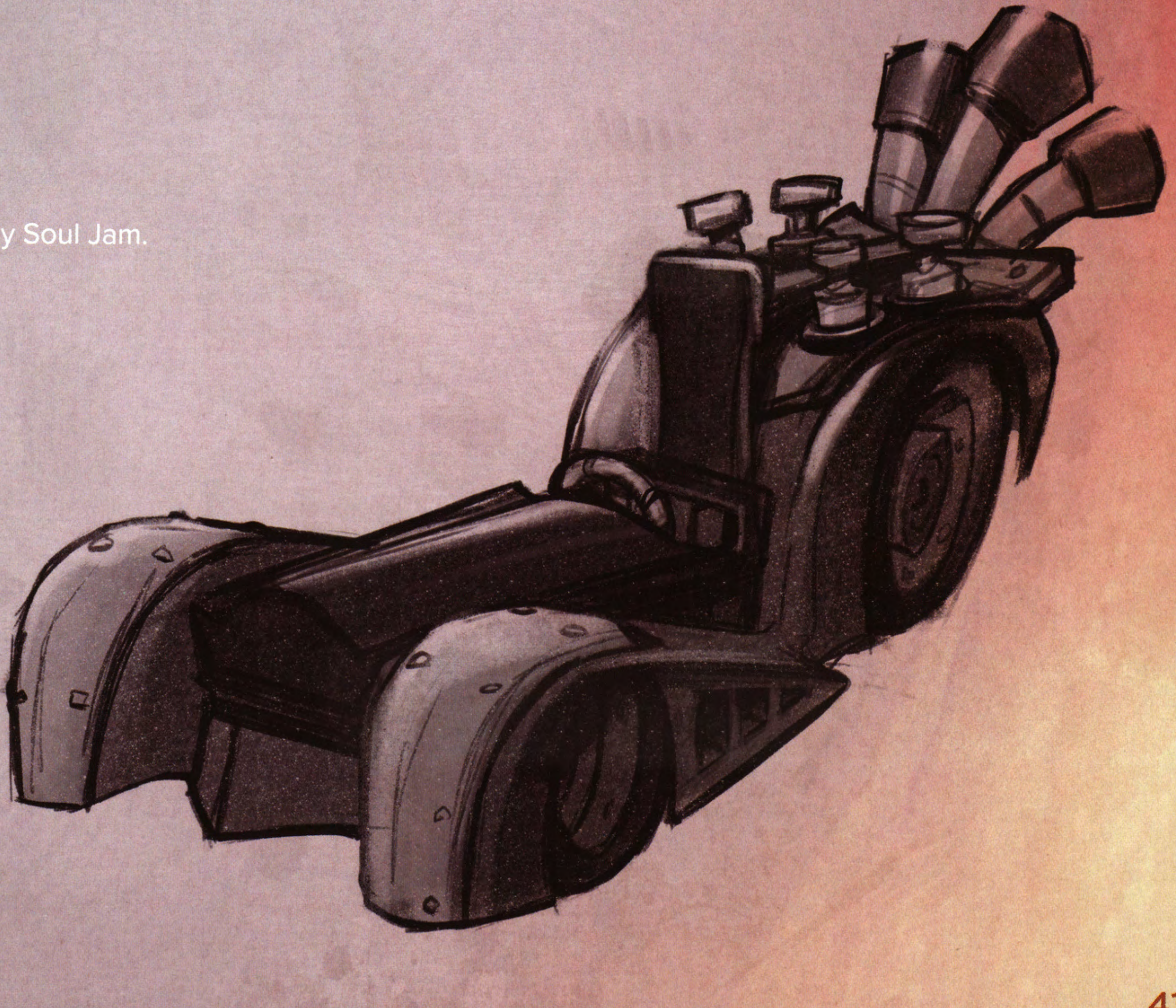


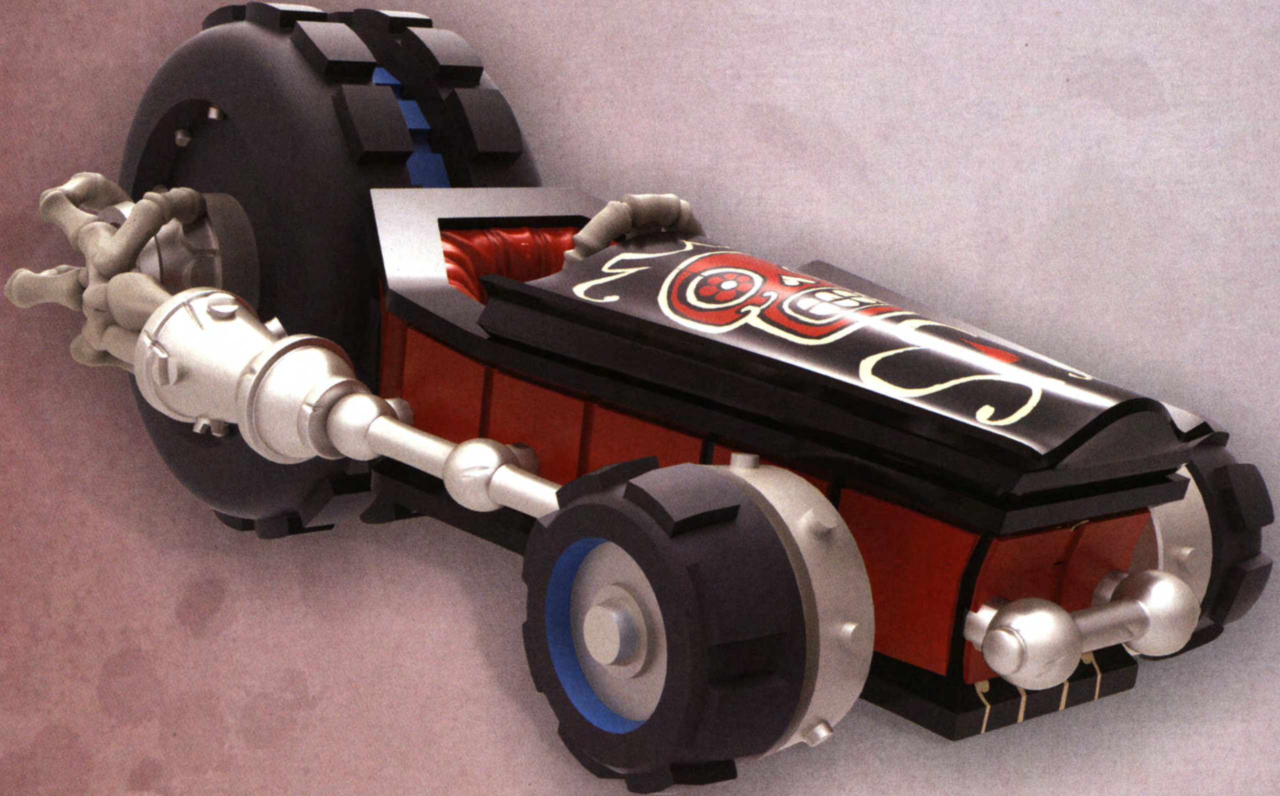


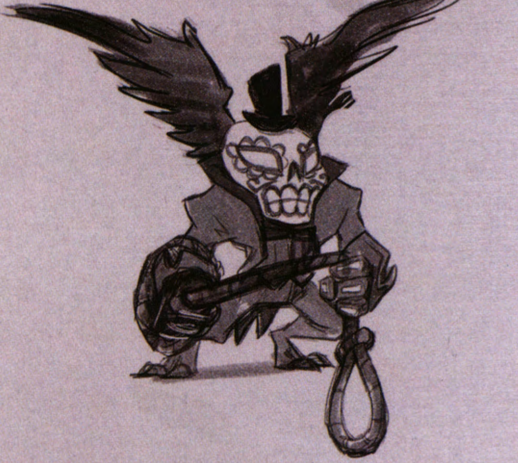
This guy is my Jam... my Soul Jam.

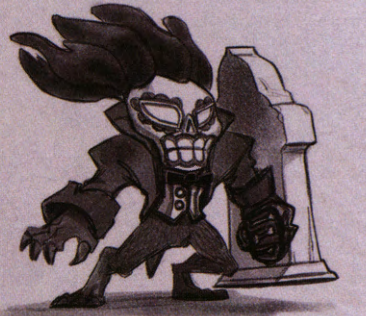
– Bill Castagna

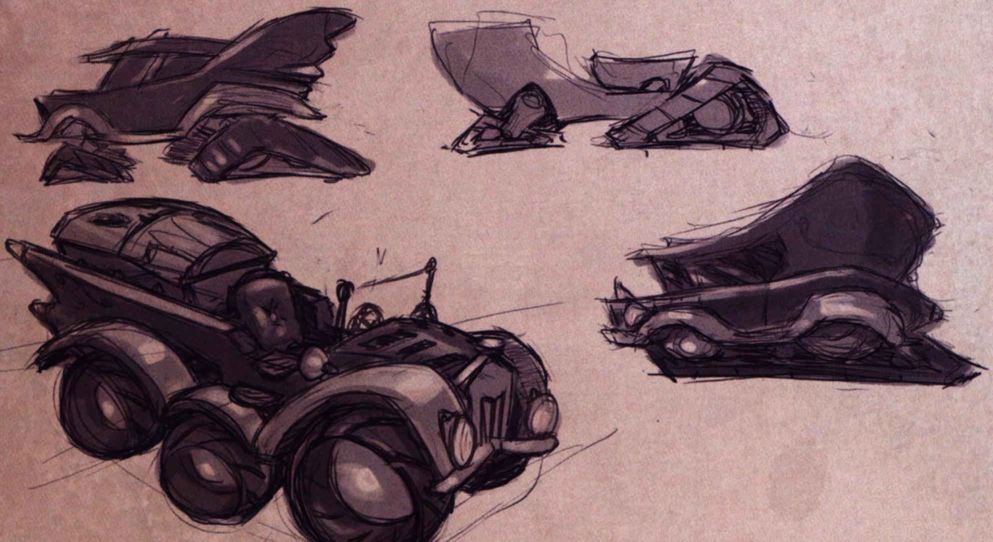


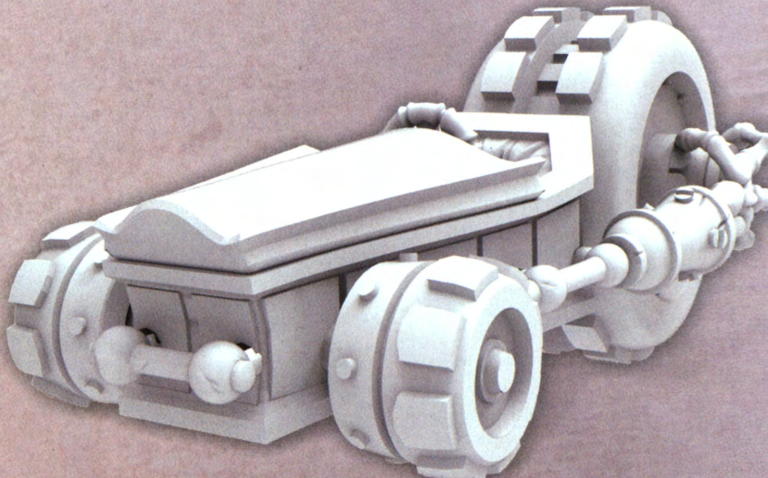






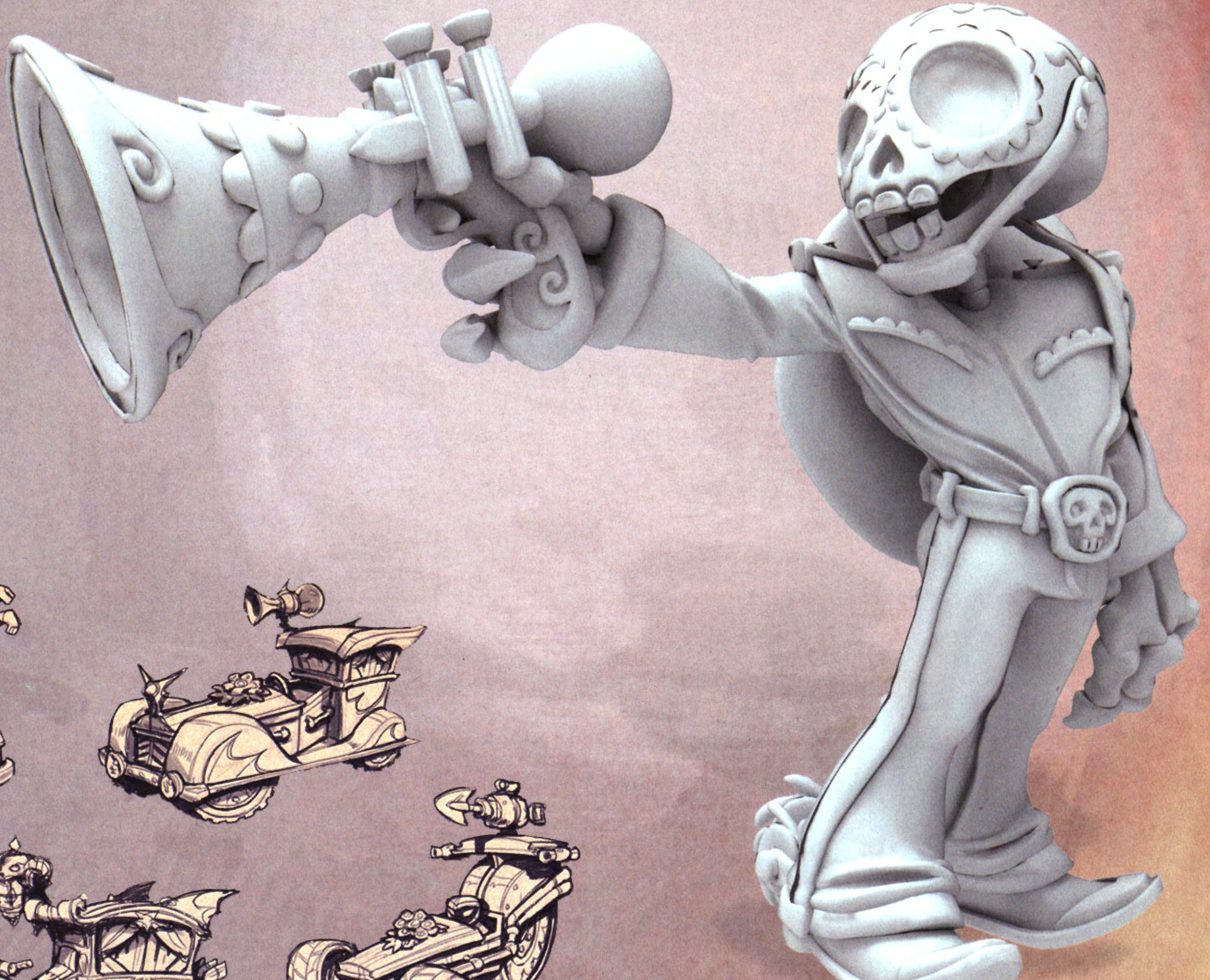


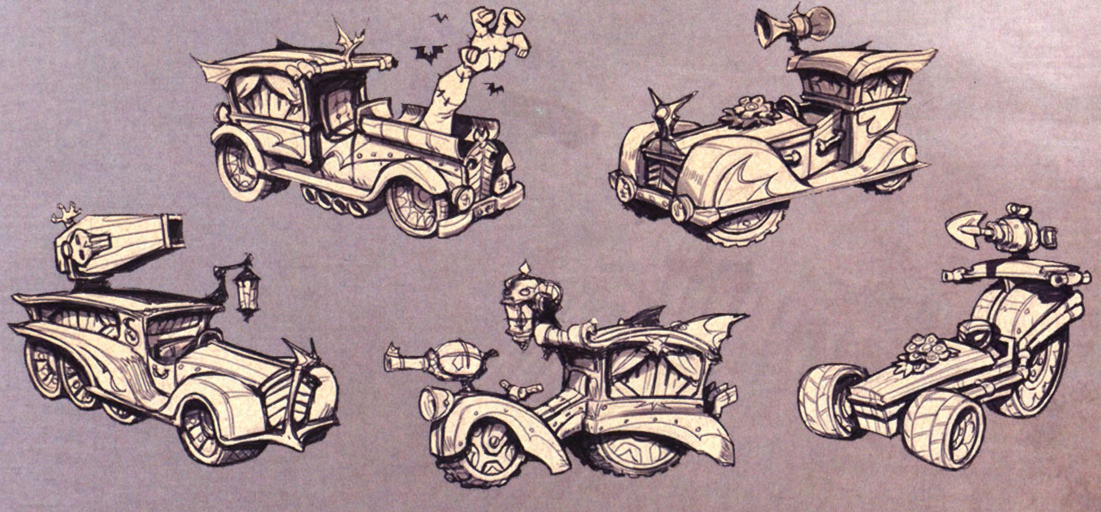




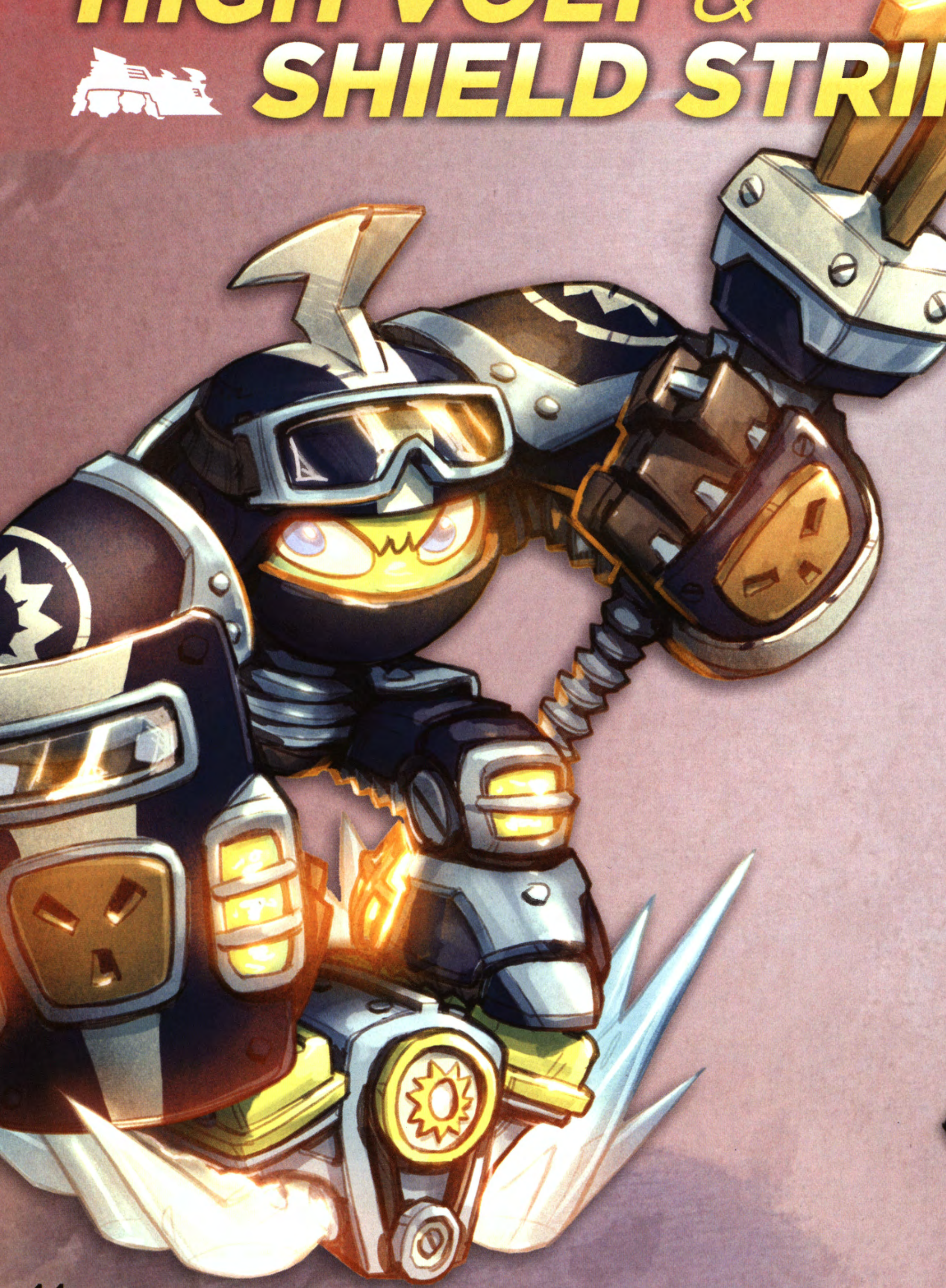
The SuperCharger Skylanders are some of the best-designed characters of the series.

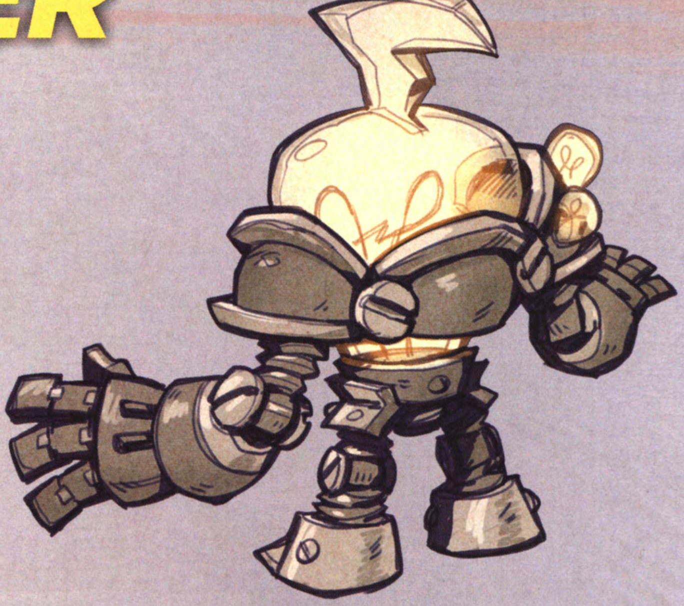
– Daniel Rositano

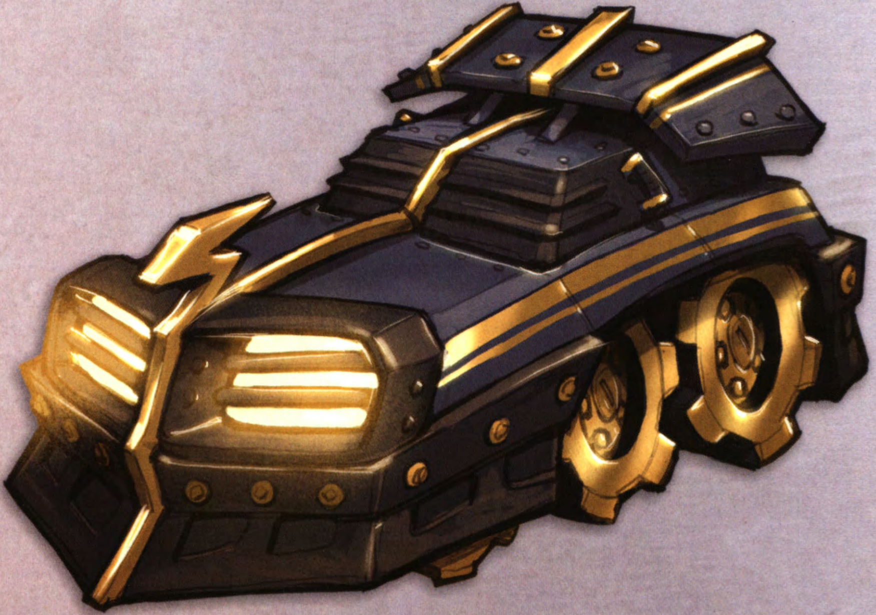


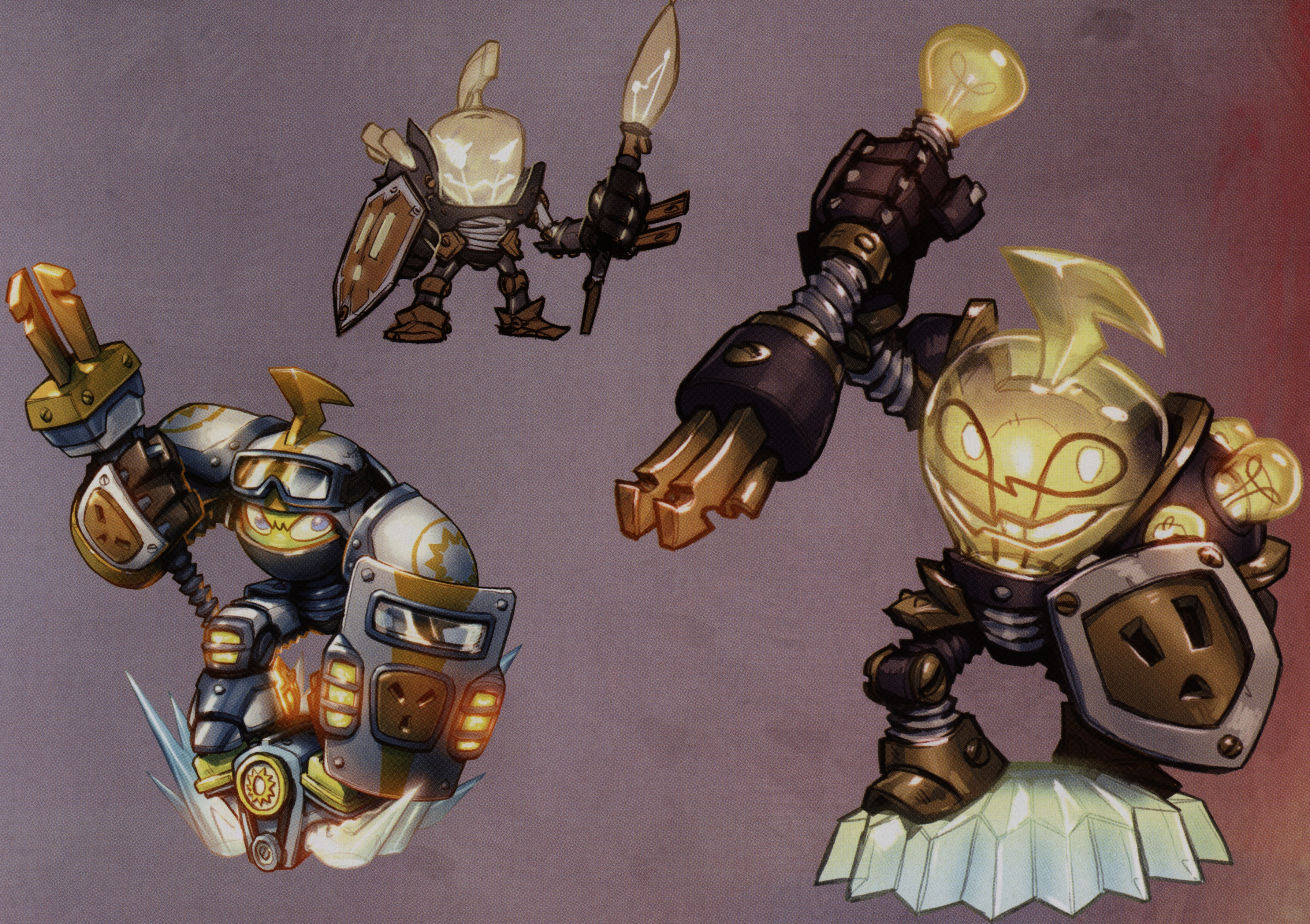


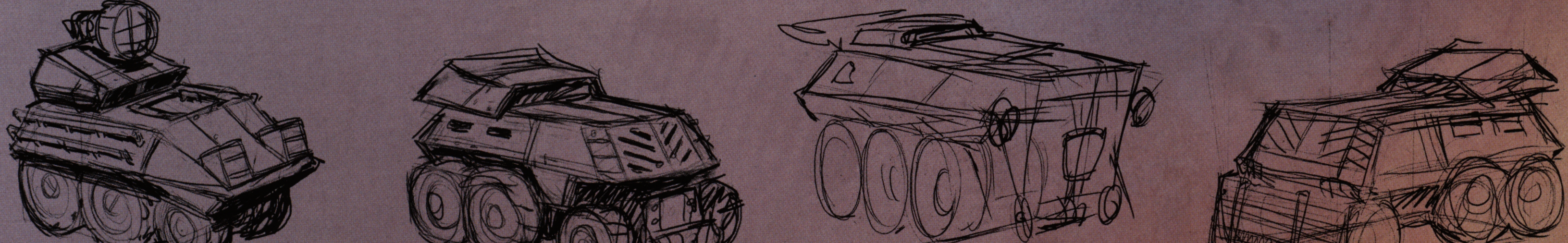
HIGH VOLT & SHIELD STRIKER

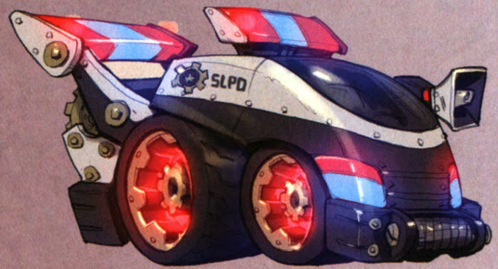


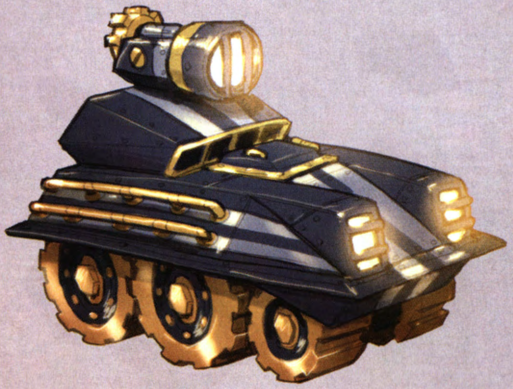


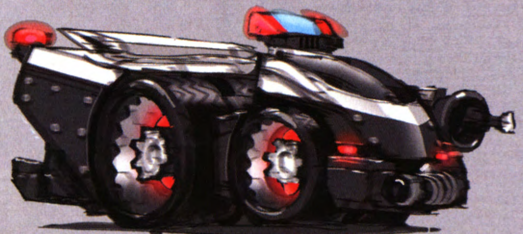


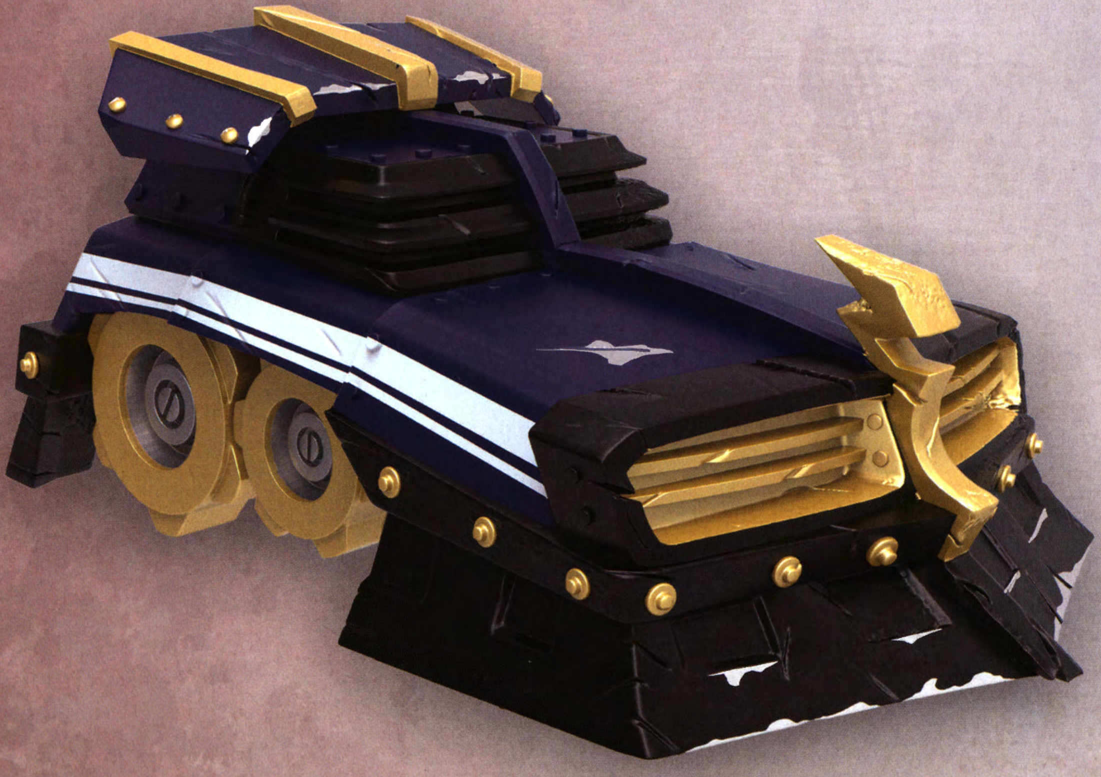


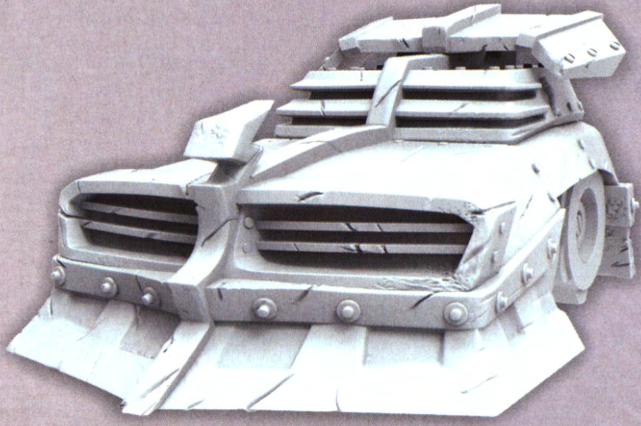


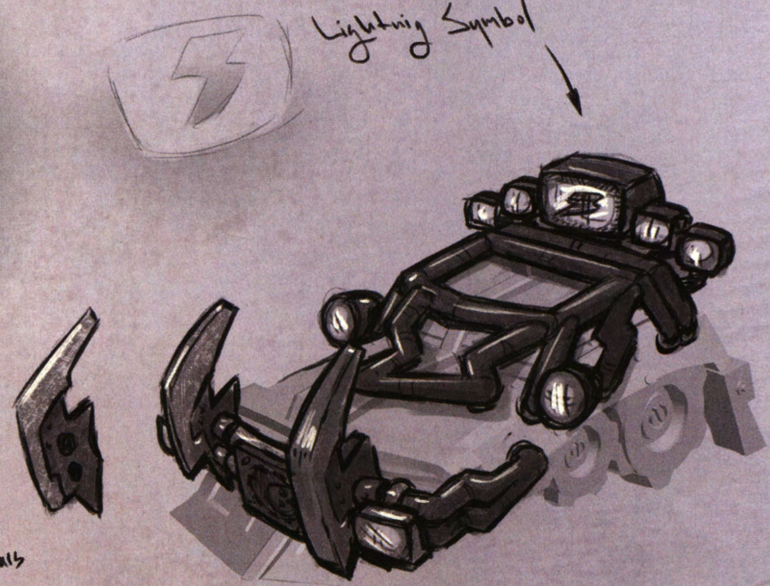






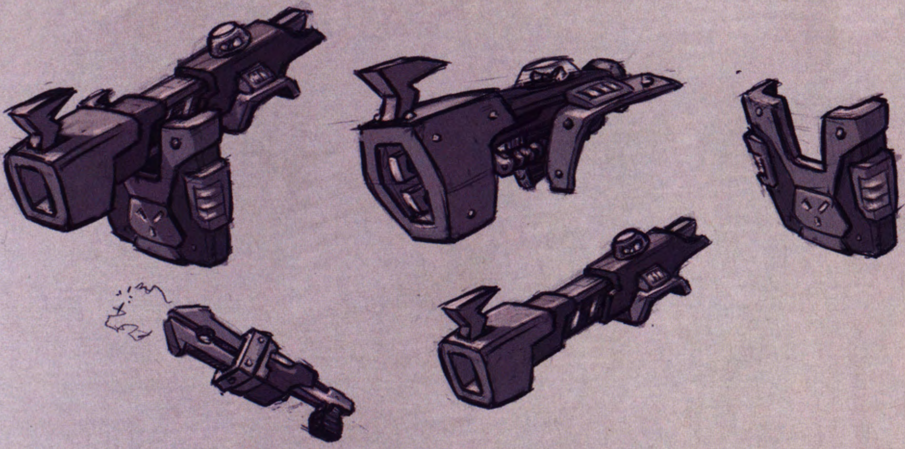


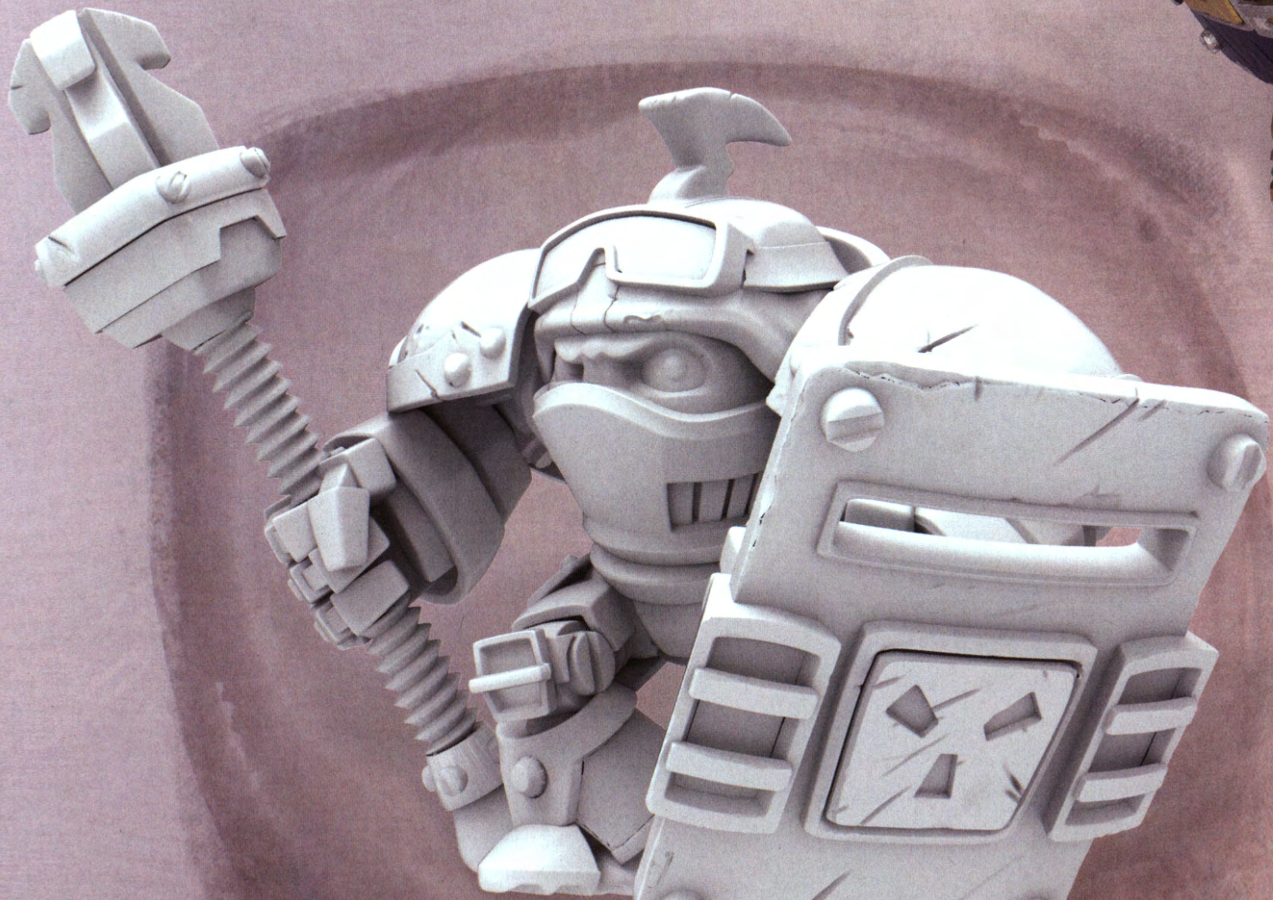



Lightnig Symbol
push bars

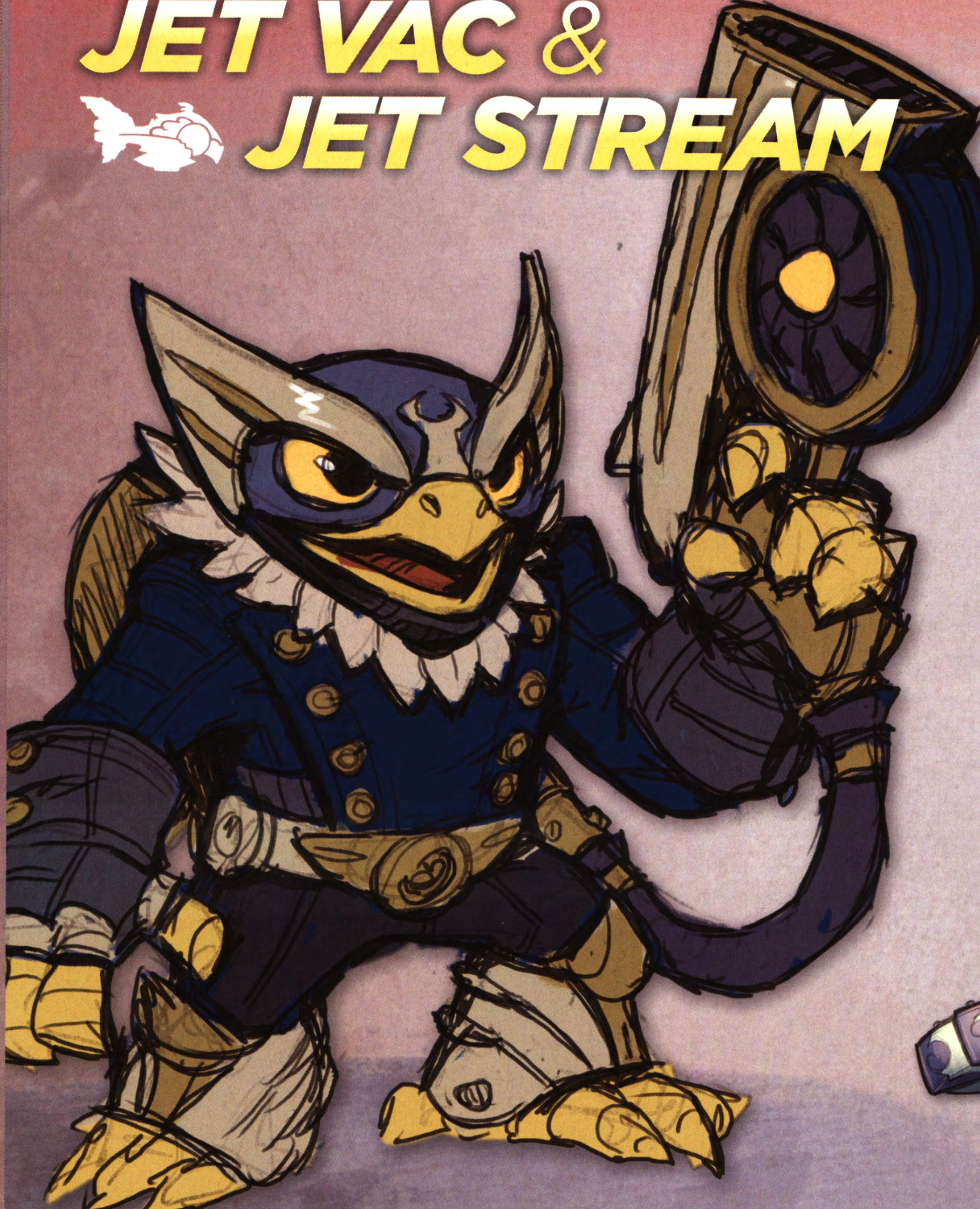
Must... drive... FAST!

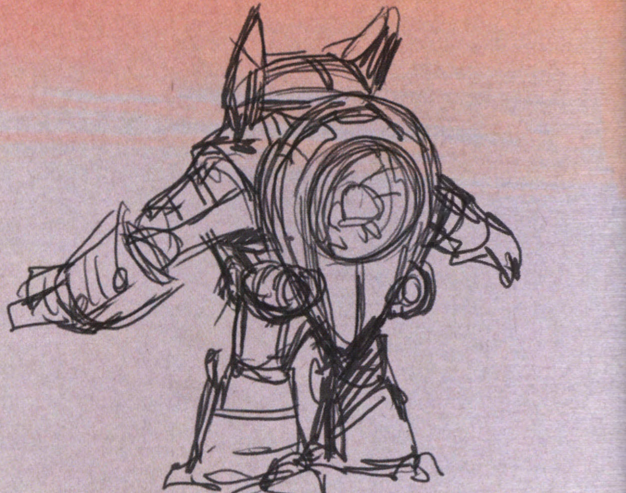
– Nicholas Ruepp

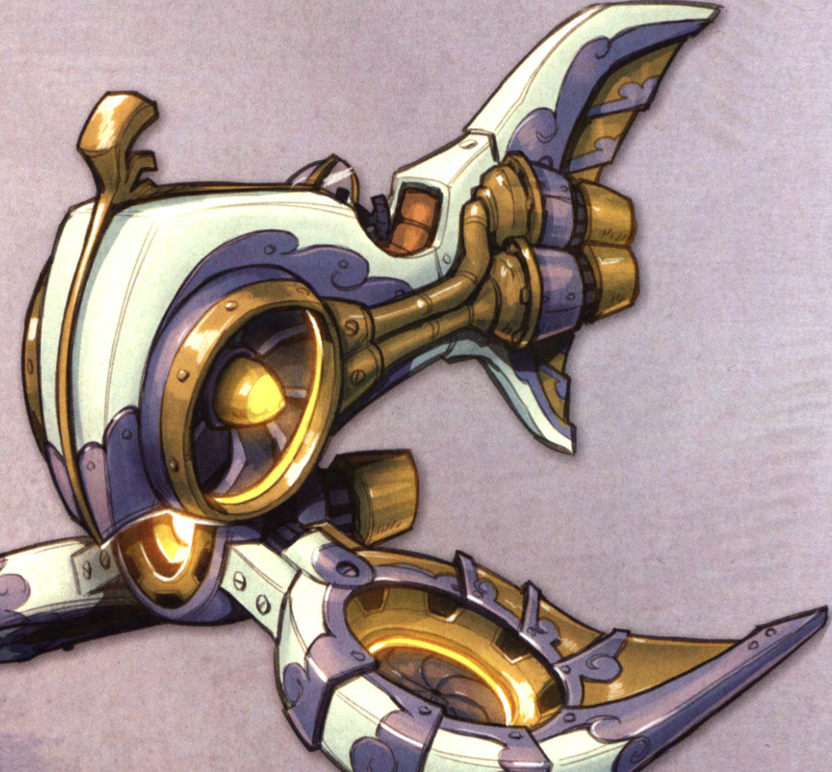


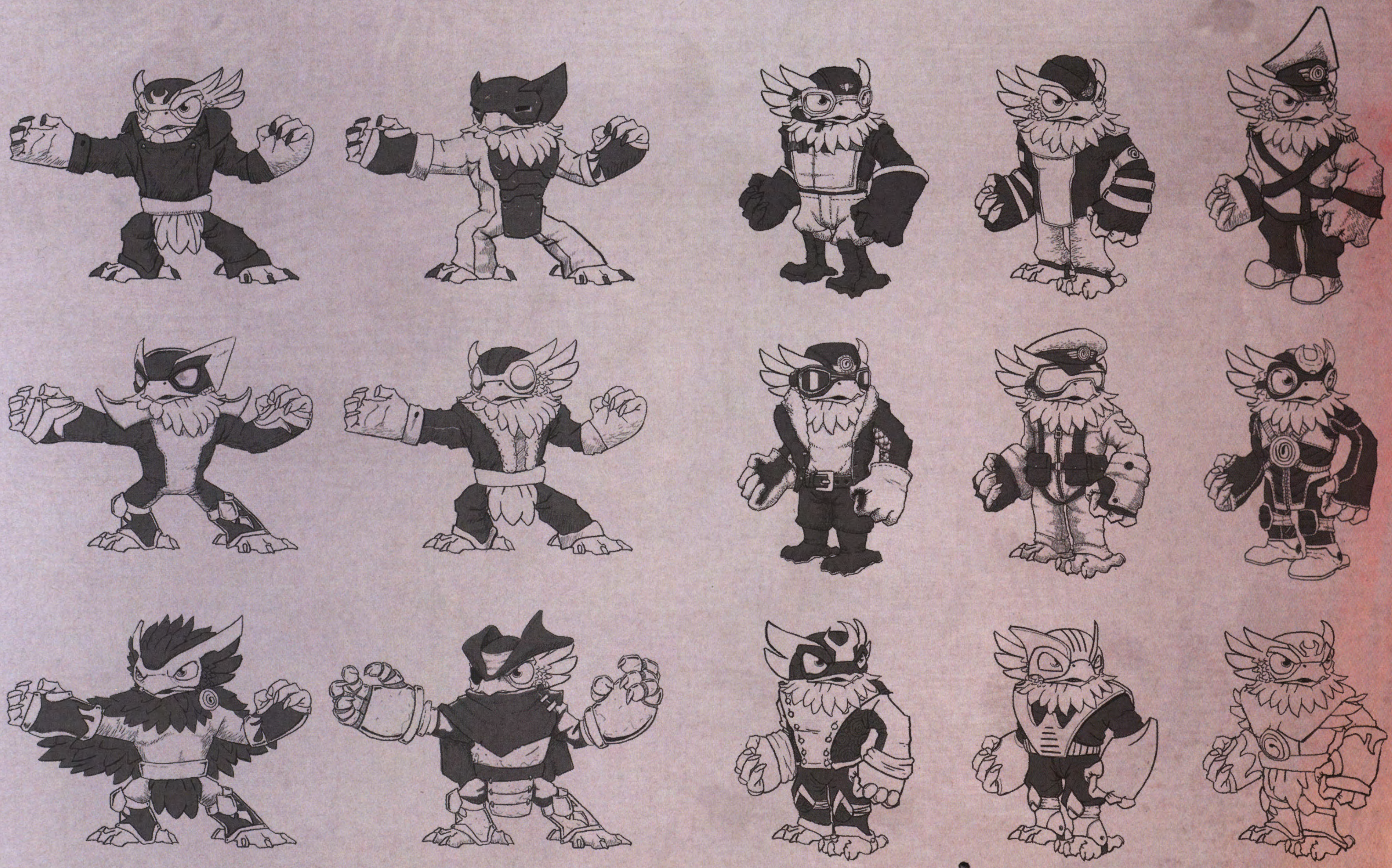


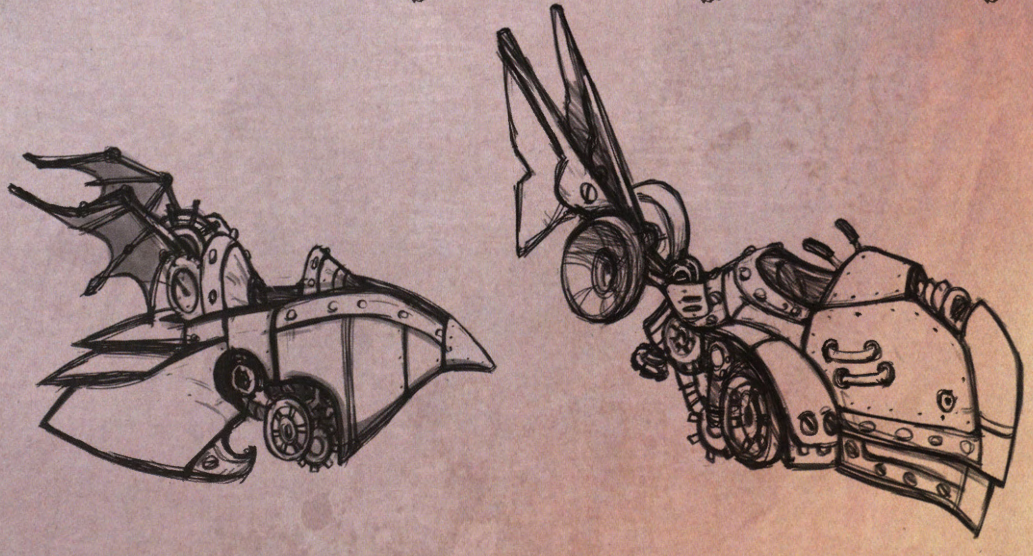
HURRICANE JET VAC & JET STREAM





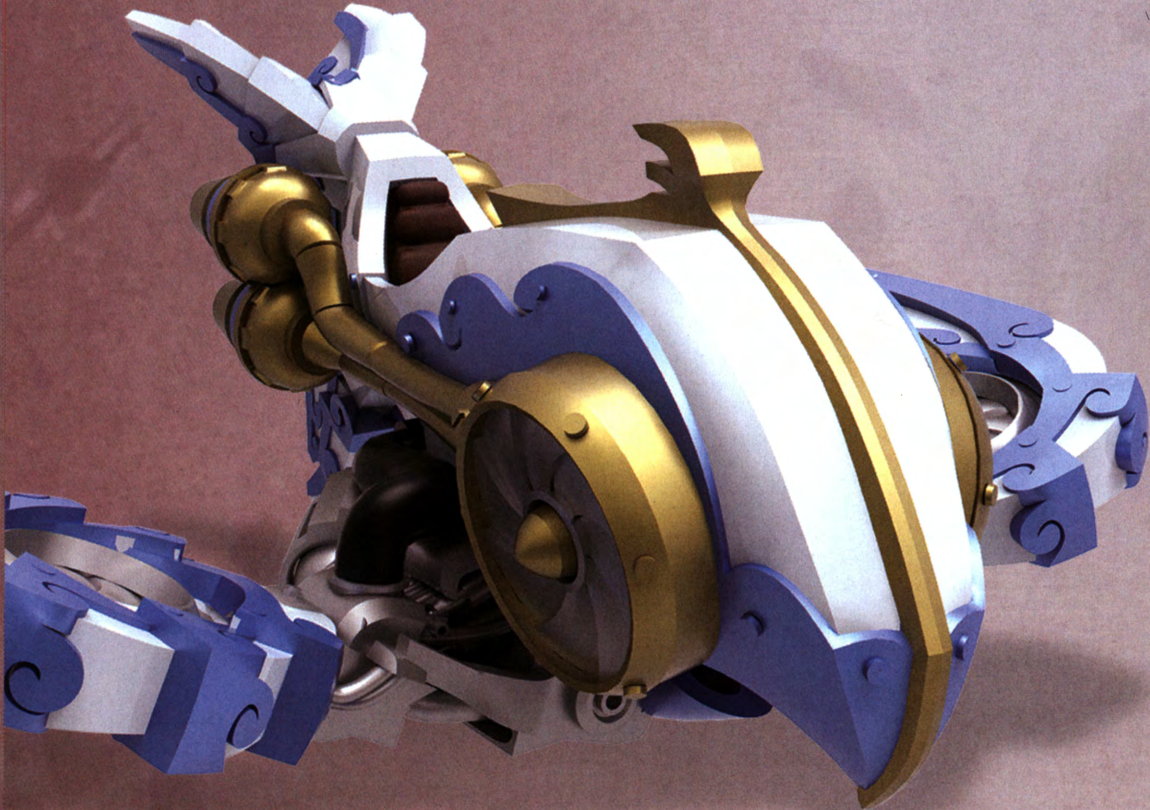


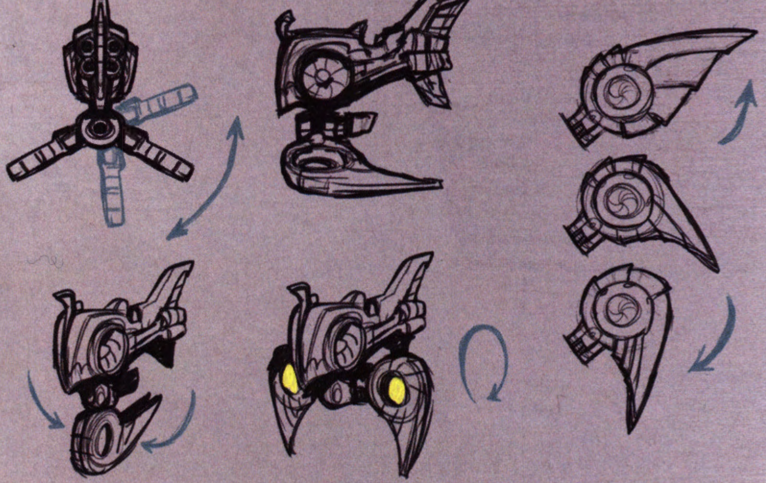


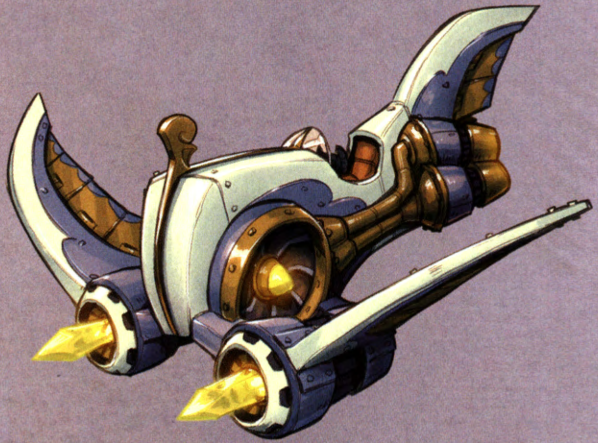


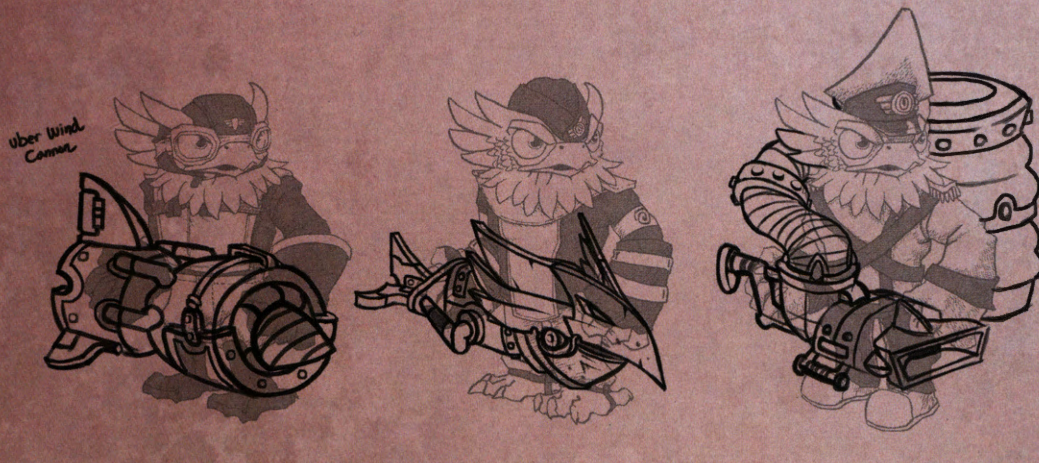
Adding vehicles to the Skylanders universe opened up a whole array of sonic possibilities for audio including engine revs, mechanical noises and, of course, horns.

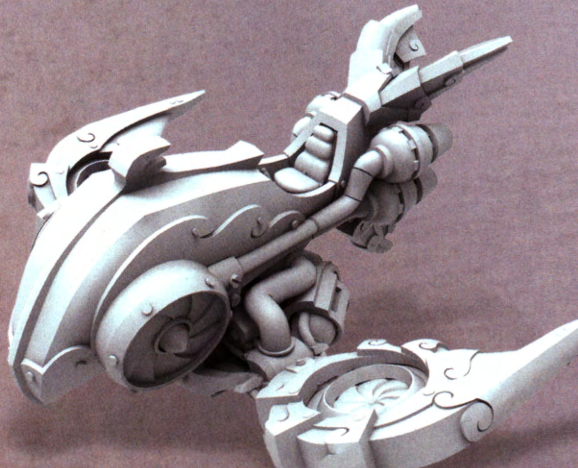
– David Stowater

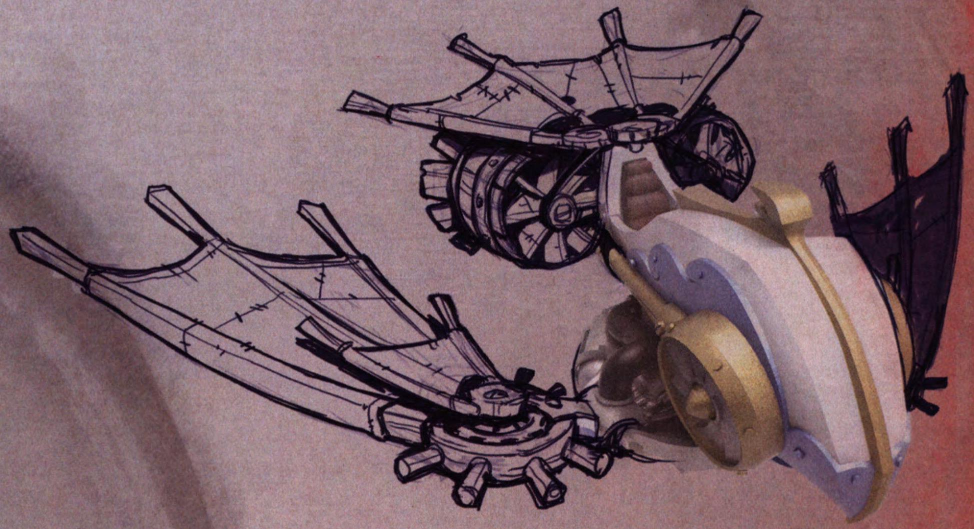


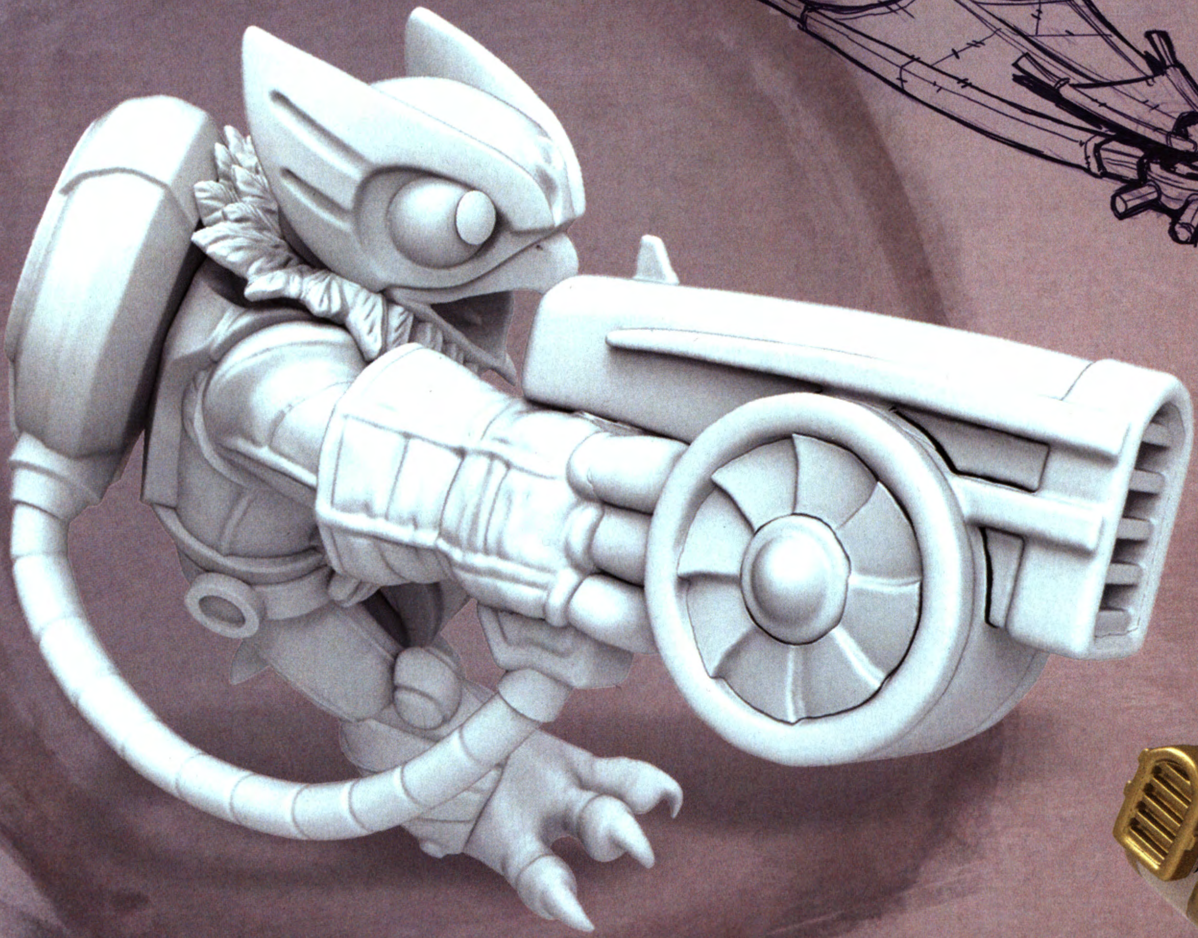





Uber Wind Cannon



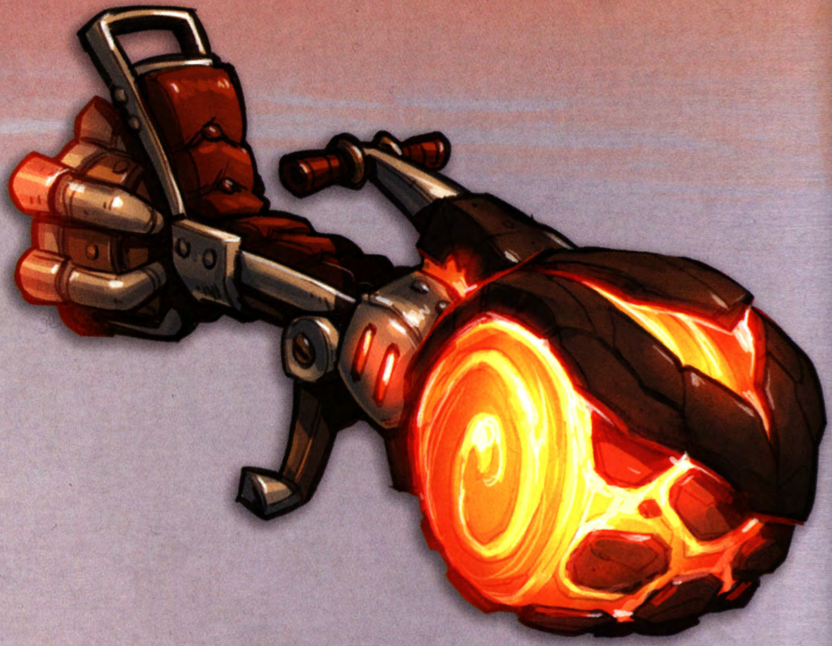


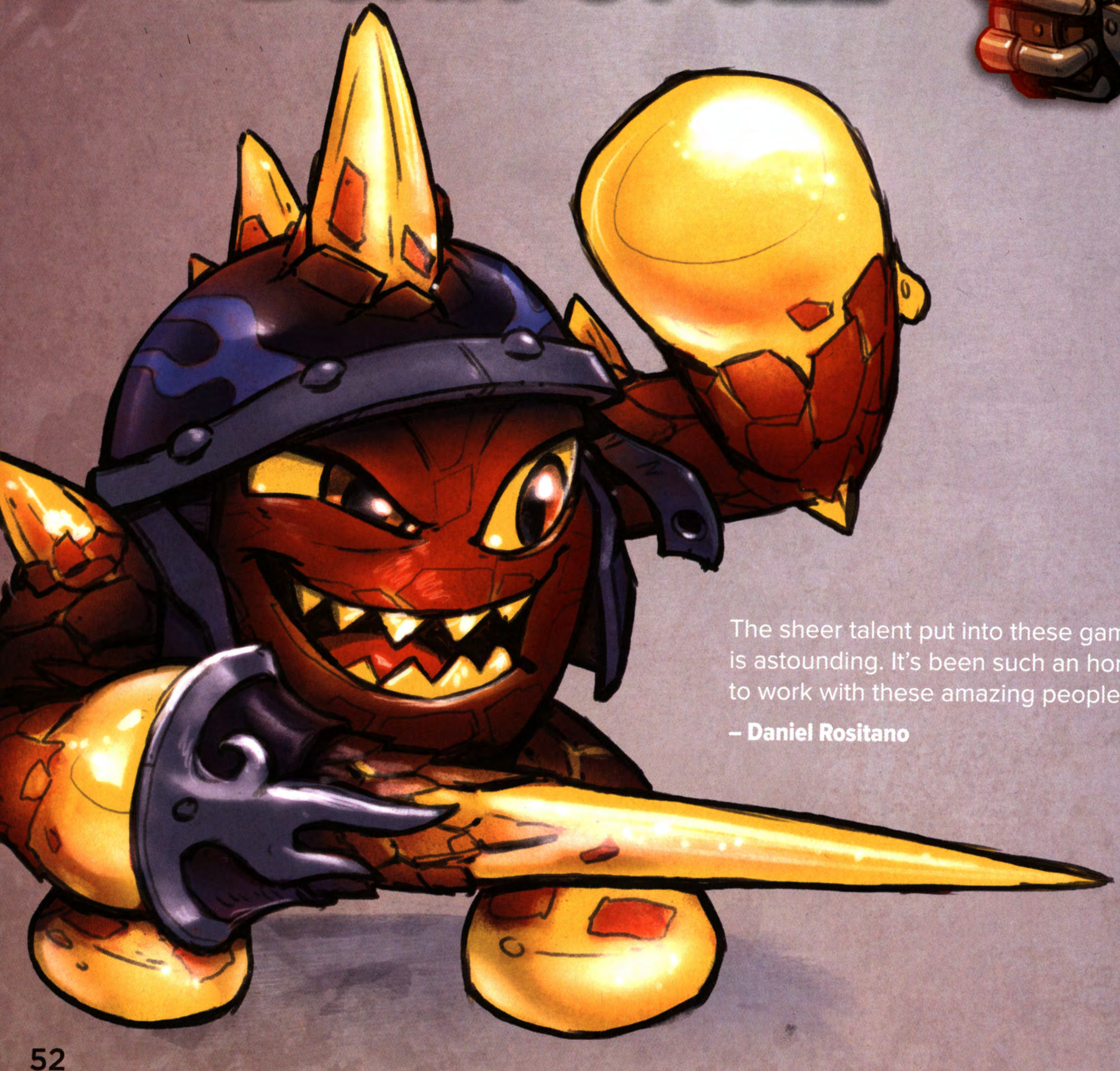


NERF guns are officially out of control!

– Nicholas Ruepp

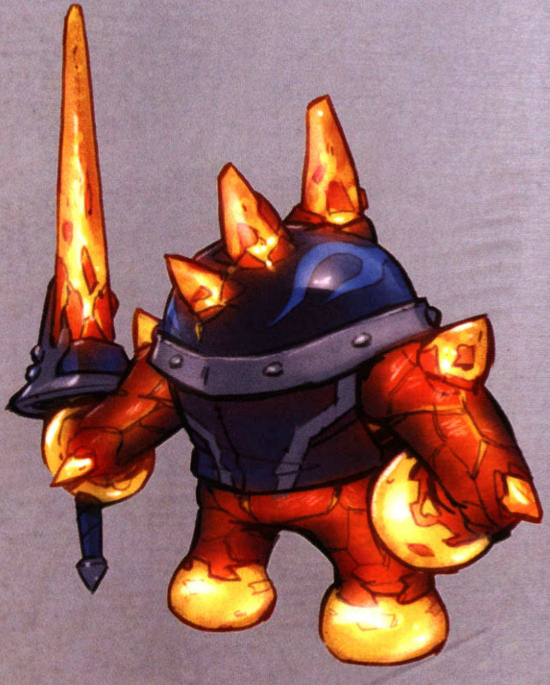
LAVA LANCE ERUPTOR & BURN CYCLE

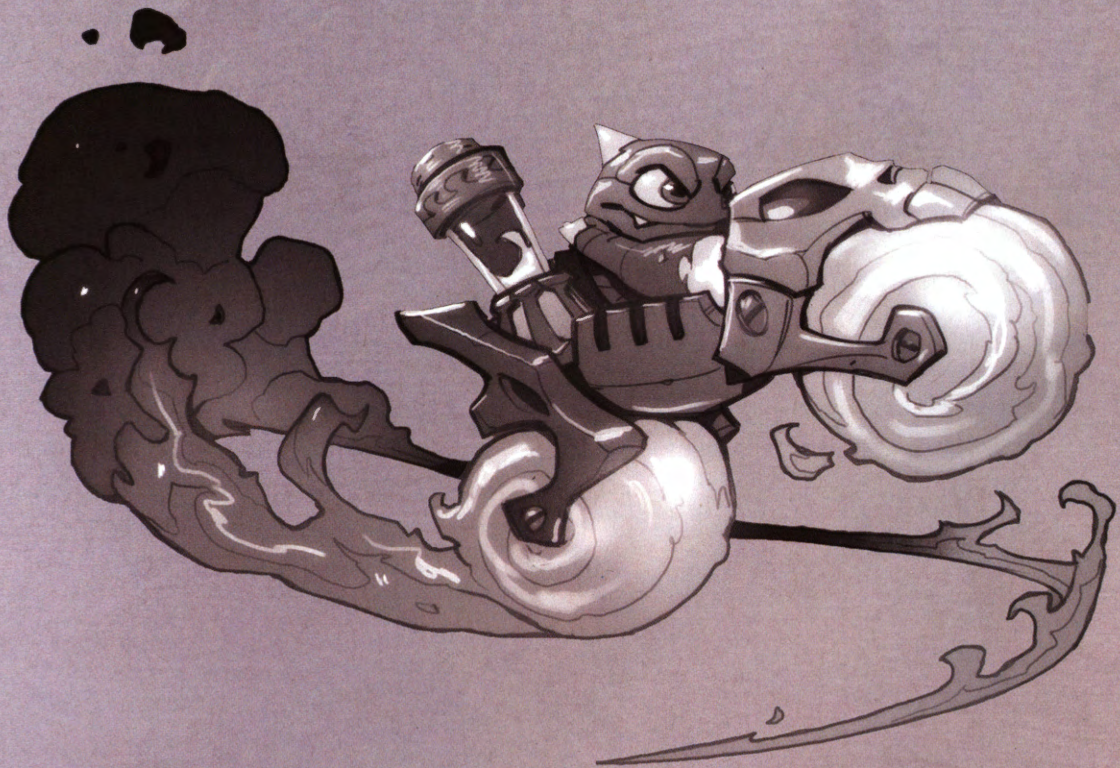


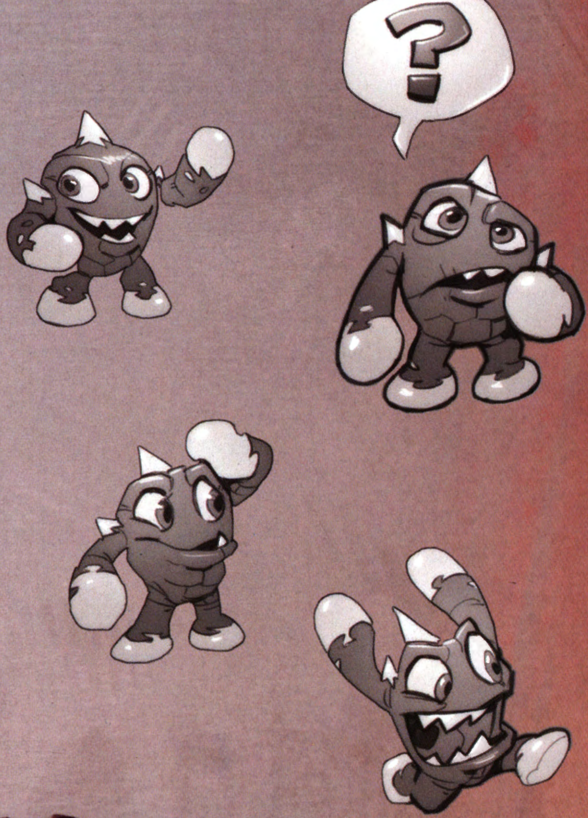


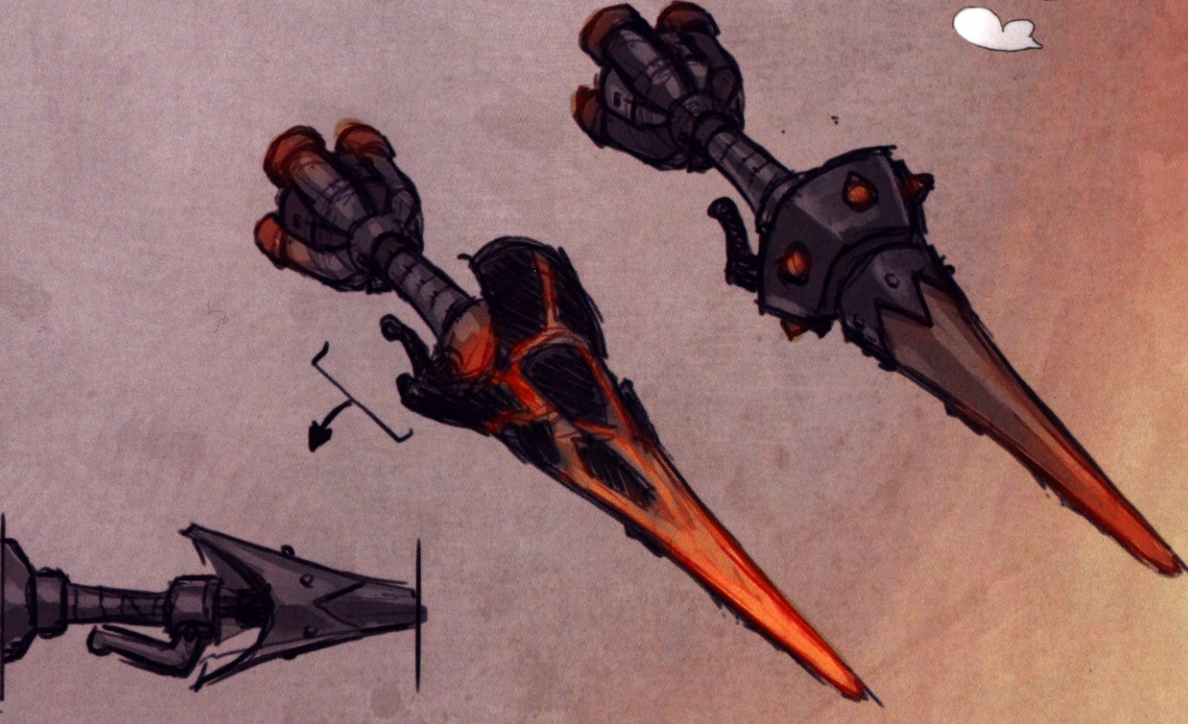
The sheer talent put into these games is astounding. It's been such an honor to work with these amazing people!

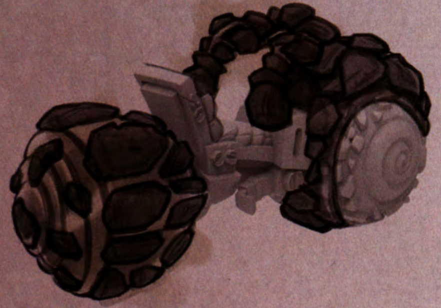
– Daniel Rositano

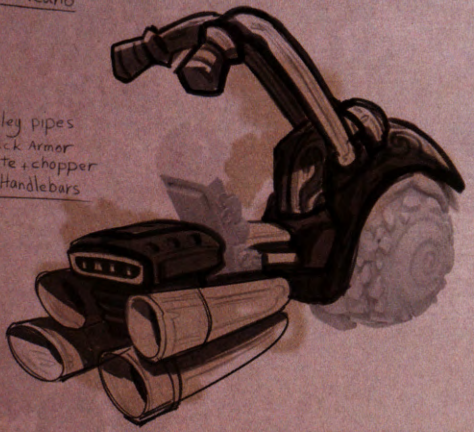


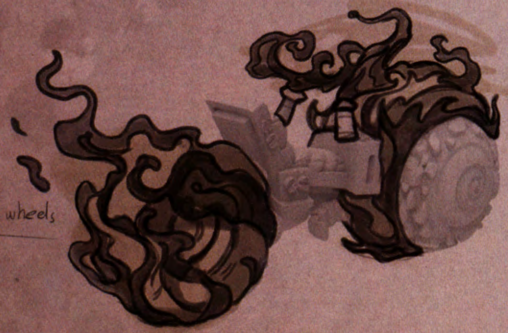


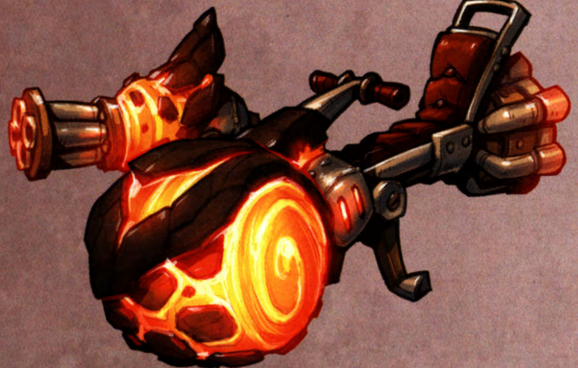


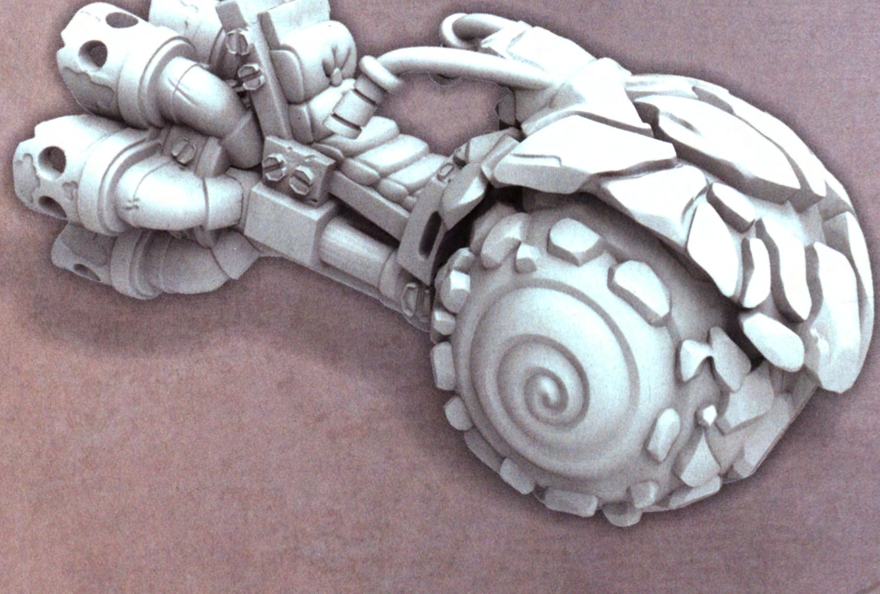



Volcano


Harley pipes
Black Armor
Plate + chopper
Handlebars

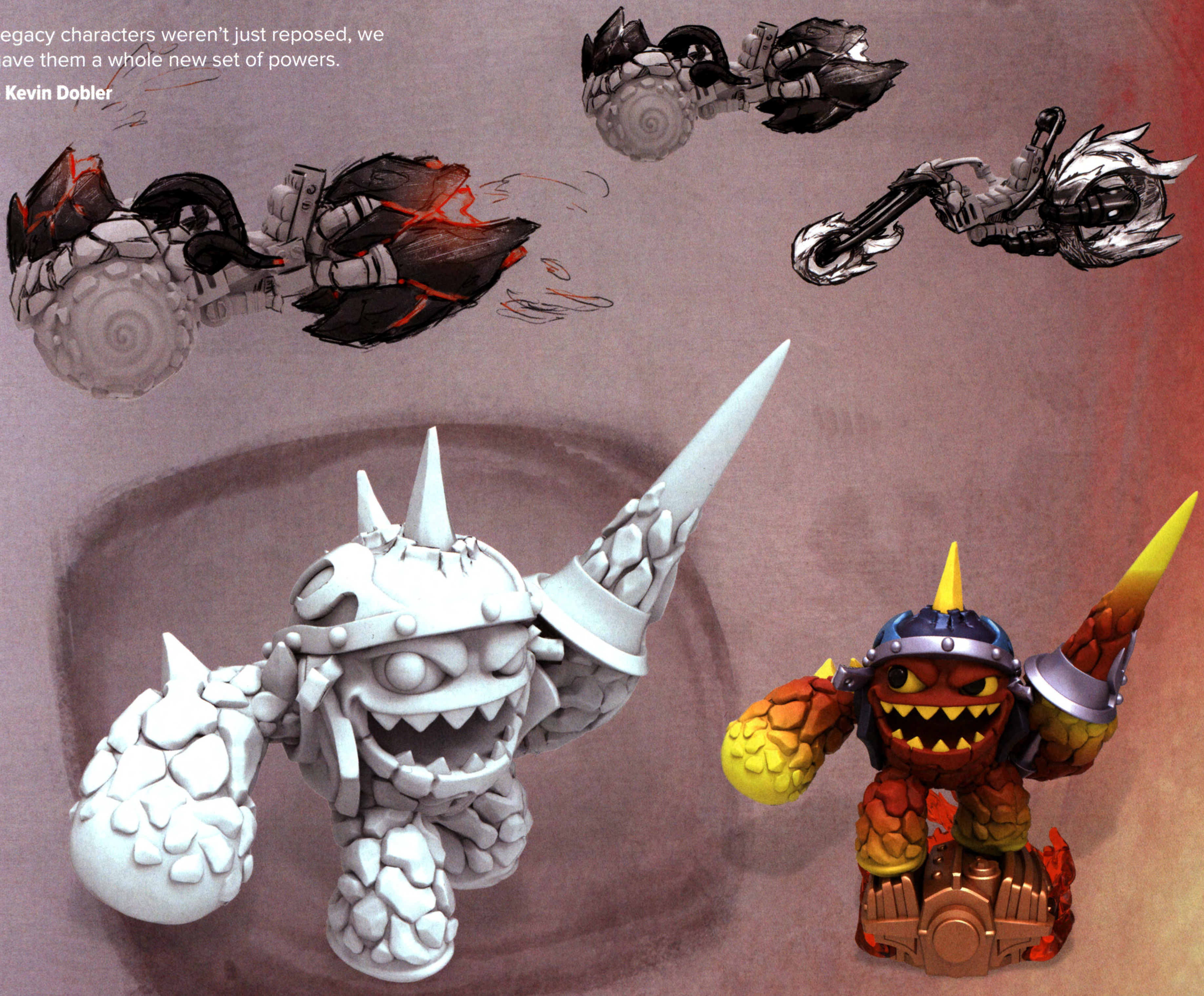

Flaming wheels





Legacy characters weren't just reposed, we gave them a whole new set of powers.

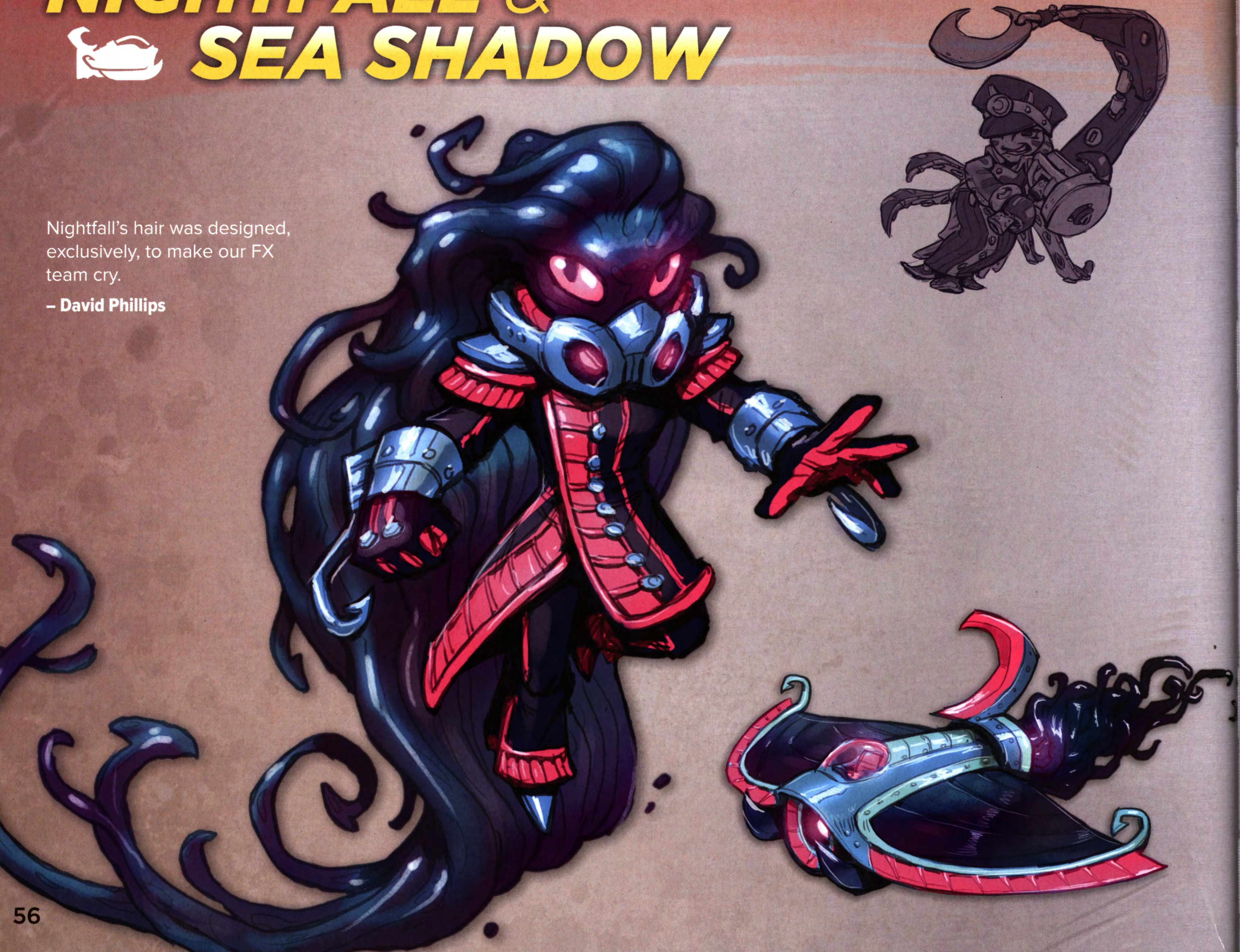
– Kevin Dobler

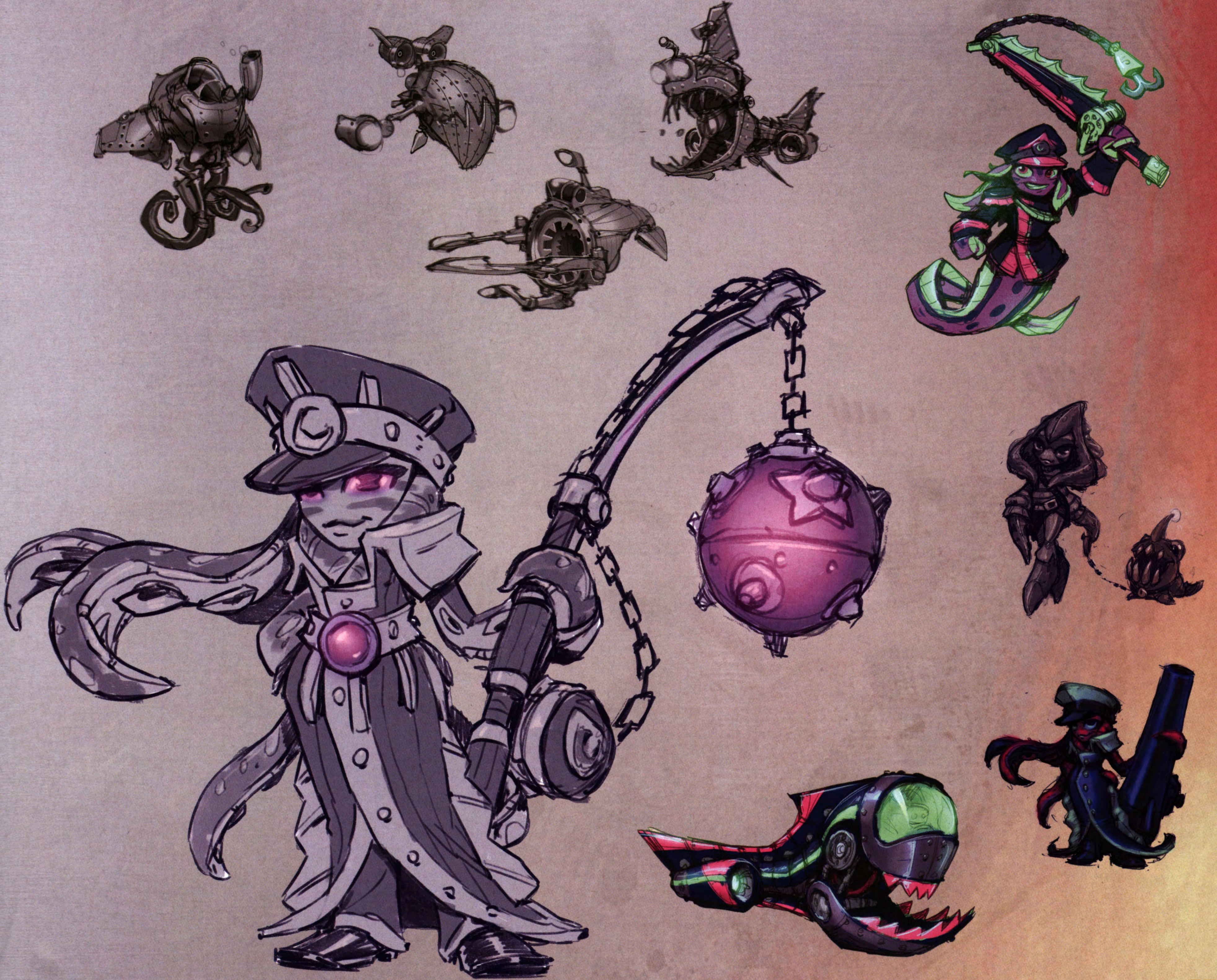


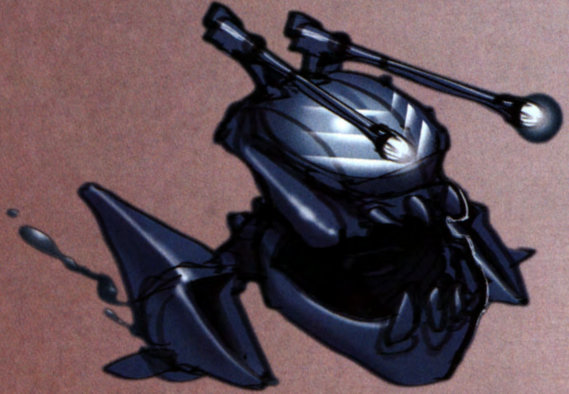
NIGHTFALL & SEA SHADOW

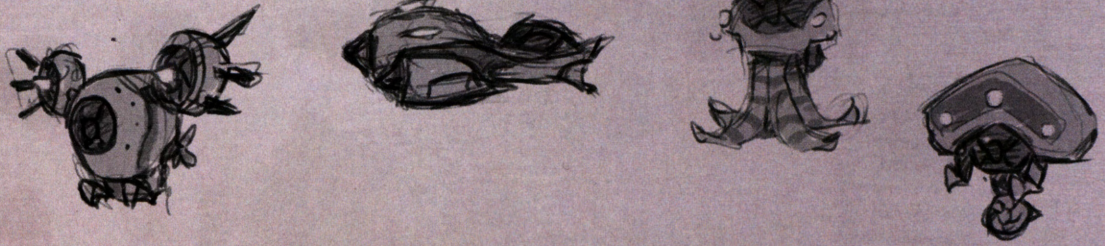
Nightfall's hair was designed, exclusively, to make our FX team cry.

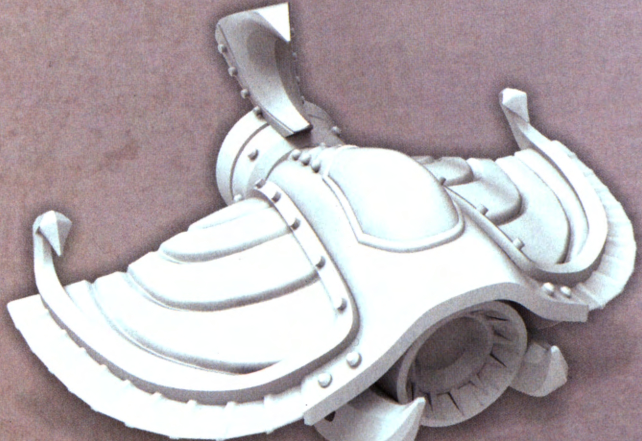
– David Phillips

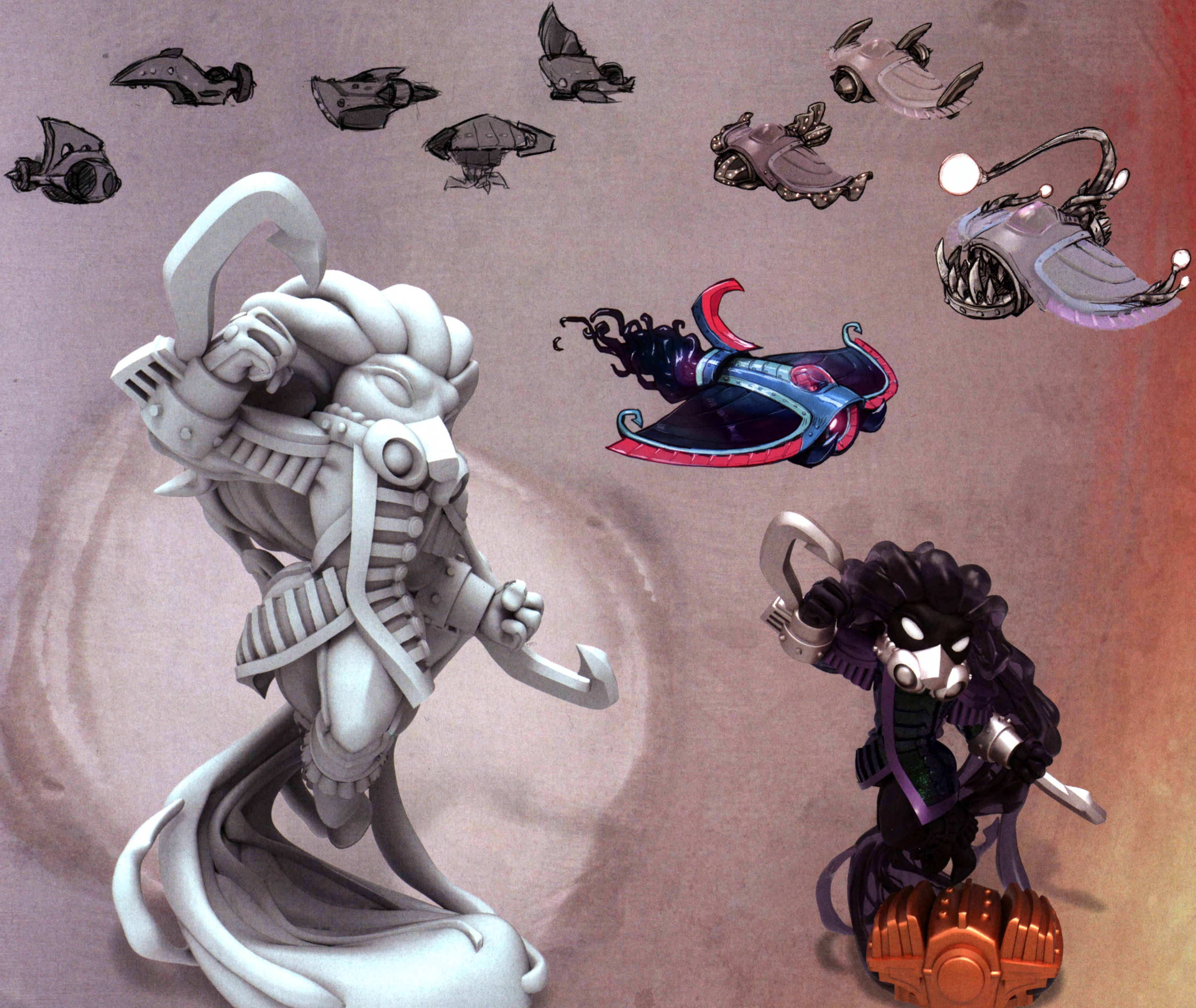






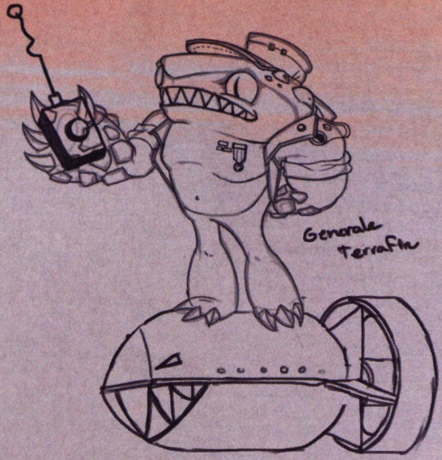


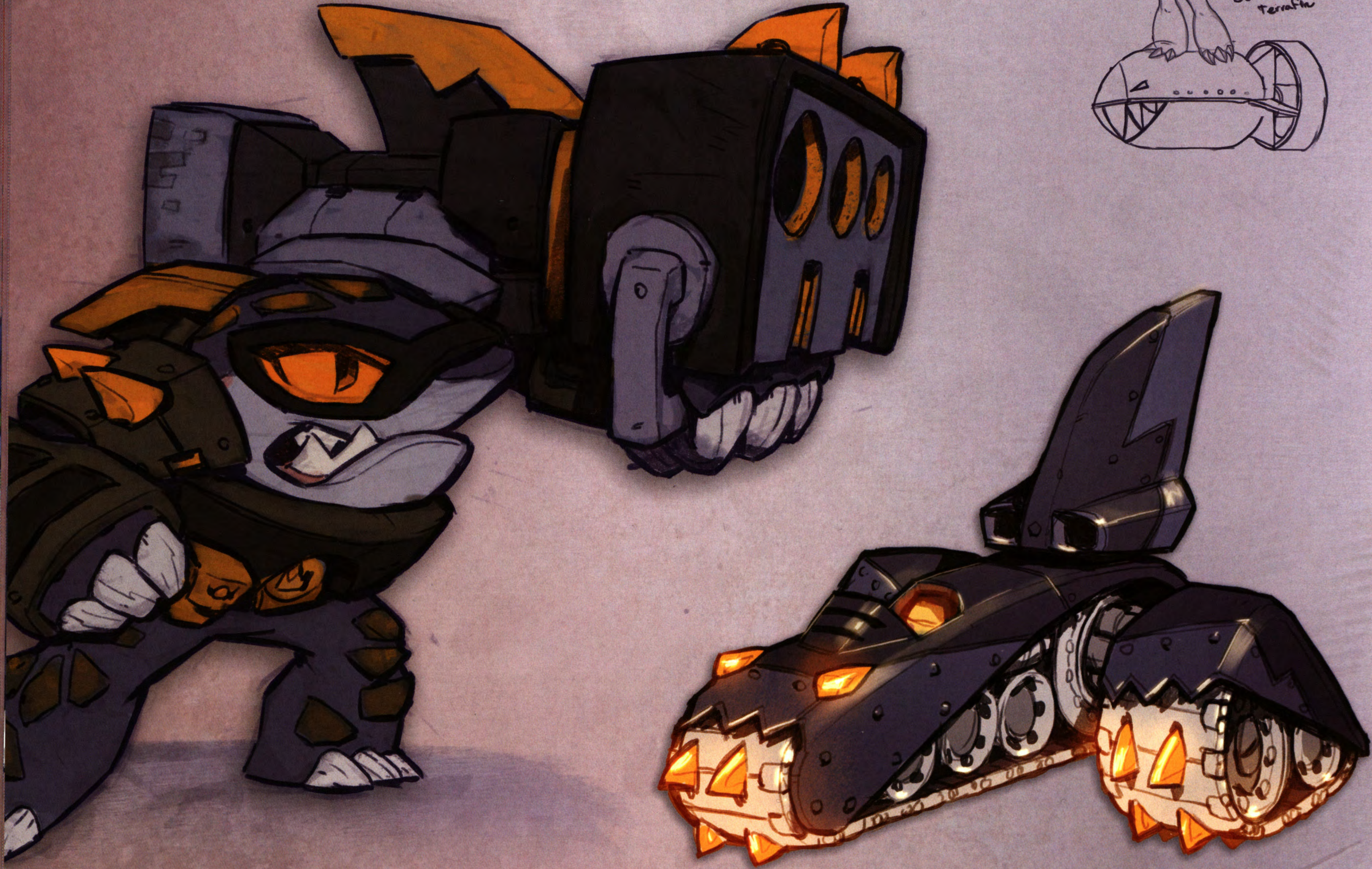


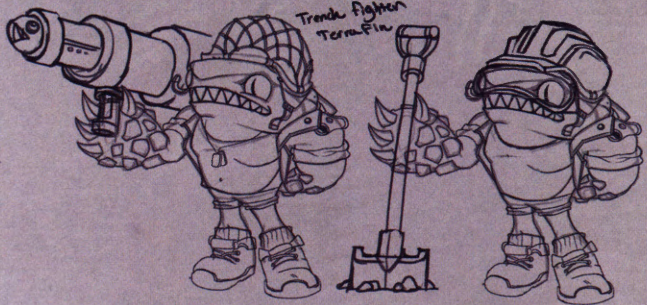


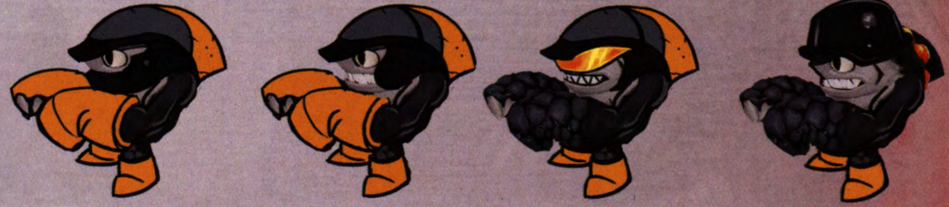
SHARK SHOOTER

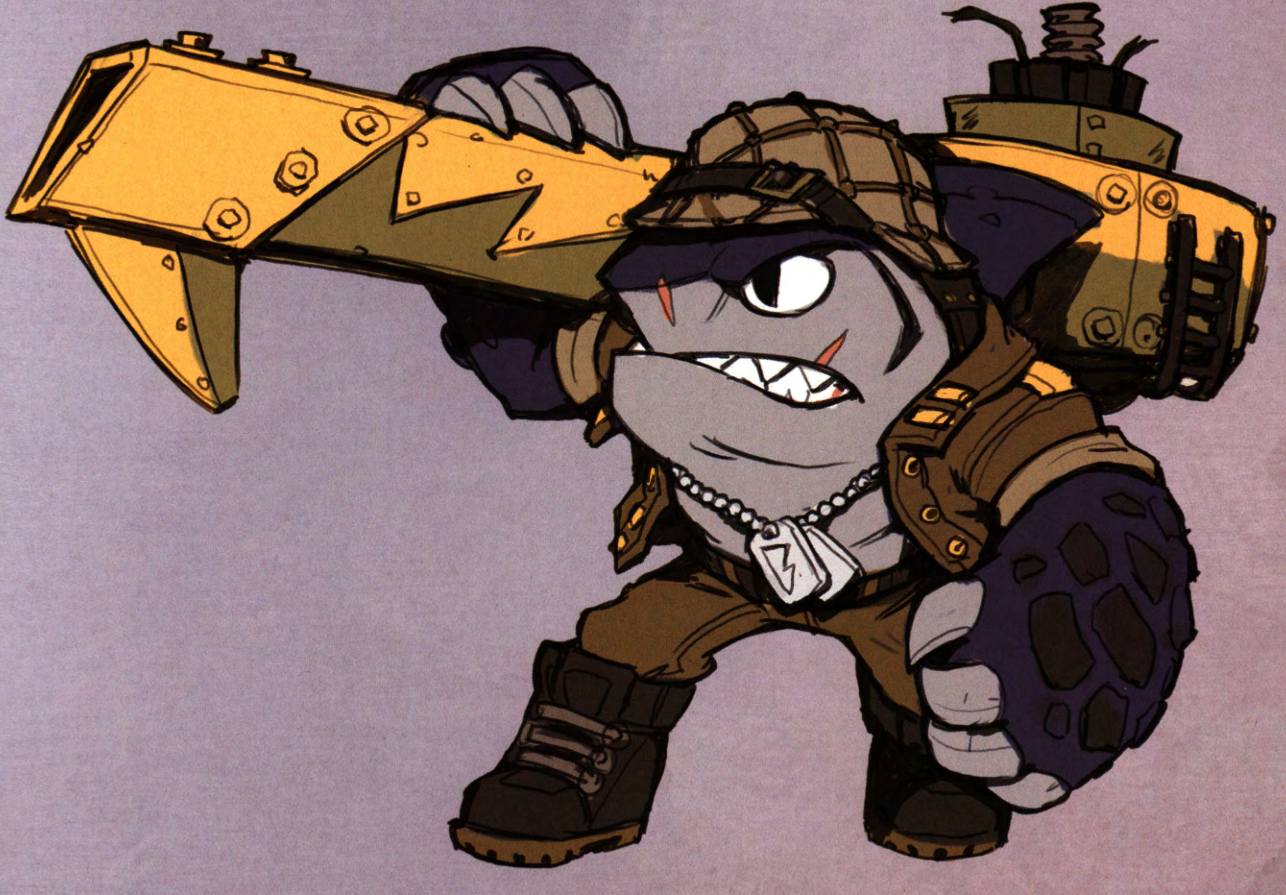
TERRAFIN & SHARK TANK

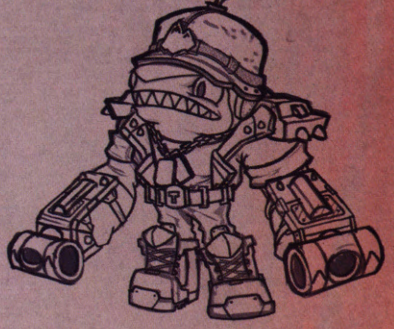

Generale Terrafin

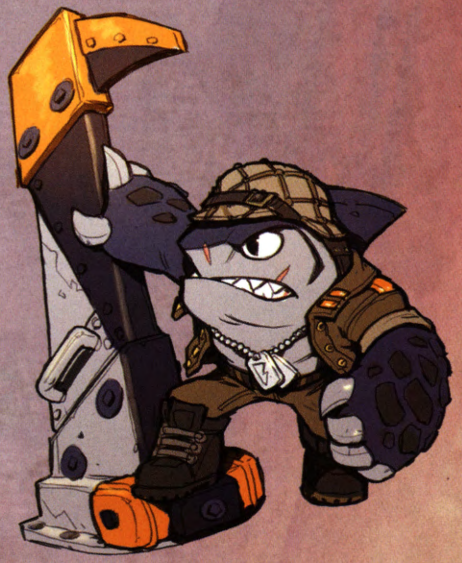


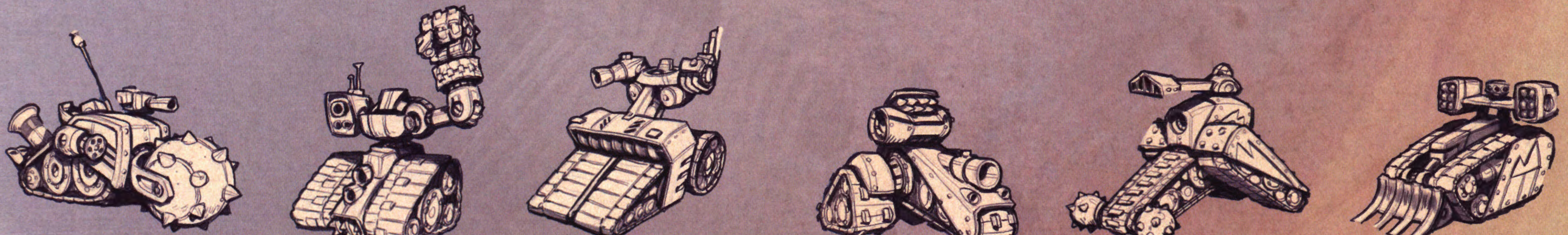

Trench fighter
TerraFin

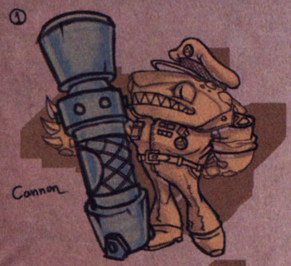




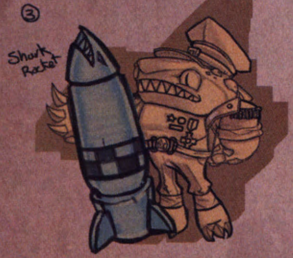




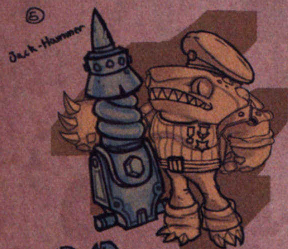




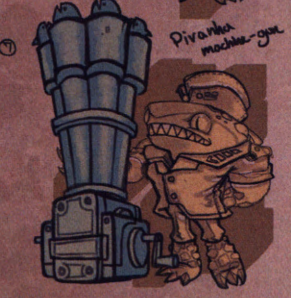
① Cannon



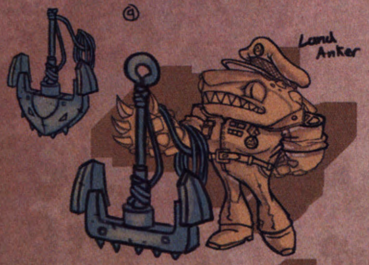
③ Shark Rocket



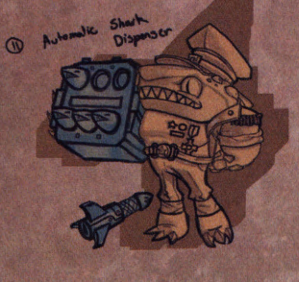
⑤ Jack-Hammer



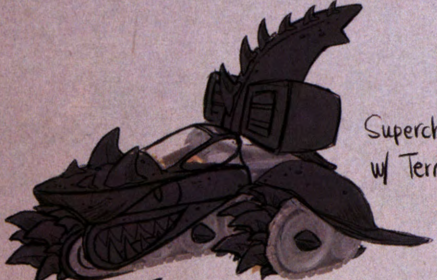
⑦ Piranha machine-gun



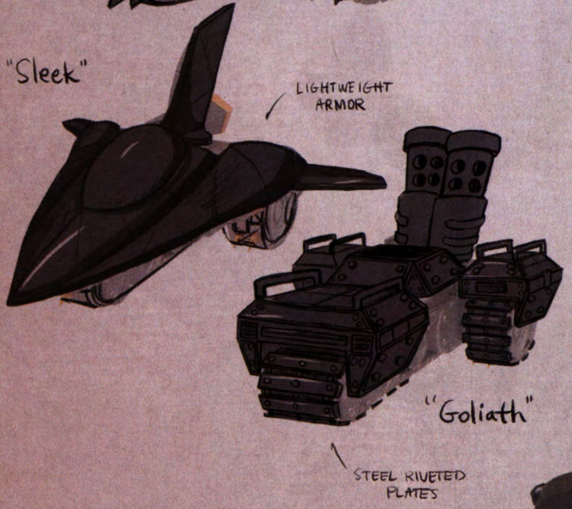
⑨ Land Anker



⑪ Automatic Shark Dispenser



Supercharged w/ Terrafin

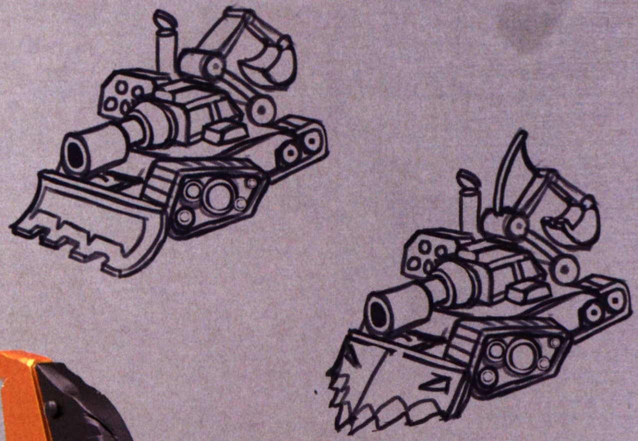


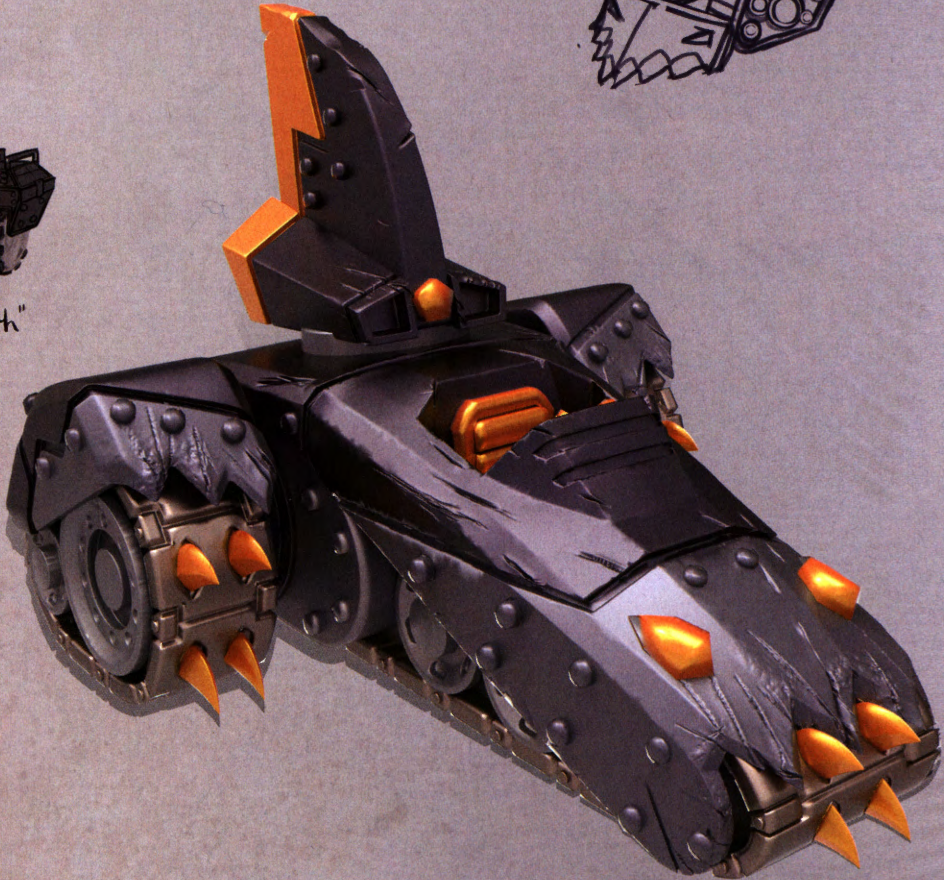
"Sleek"

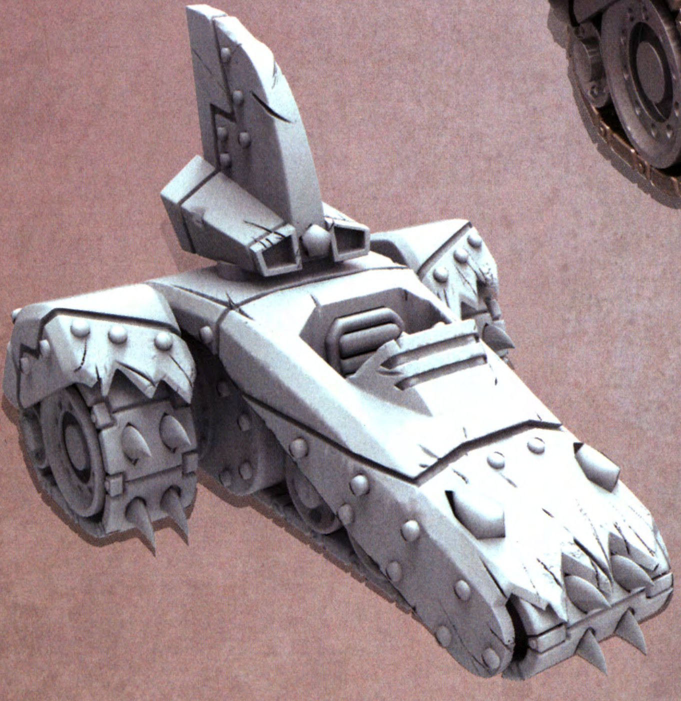
LIGHTWEIGHT ARMOR

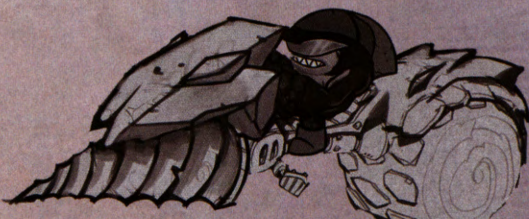
"Goliath"

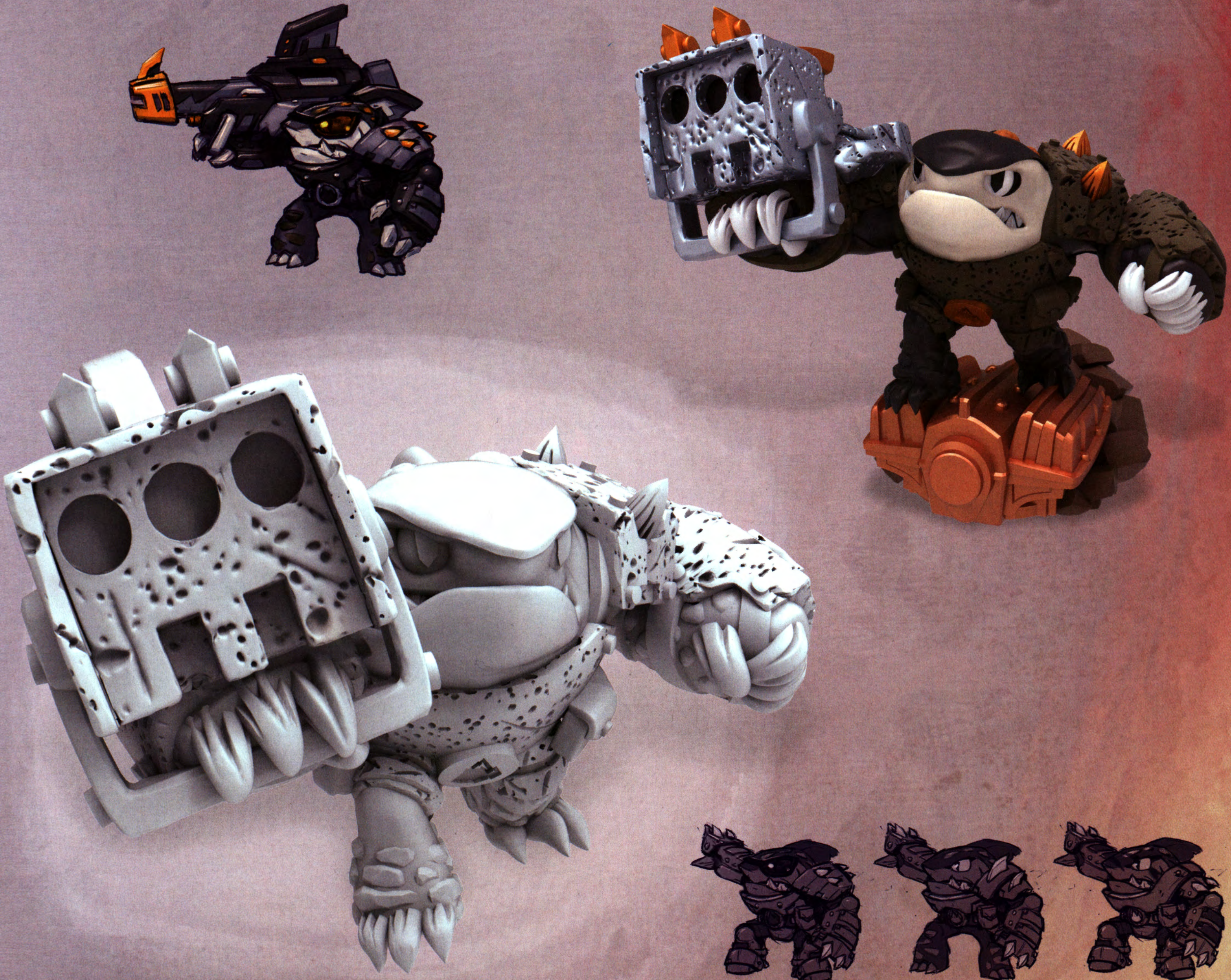
STEEL RIVETED PLATES



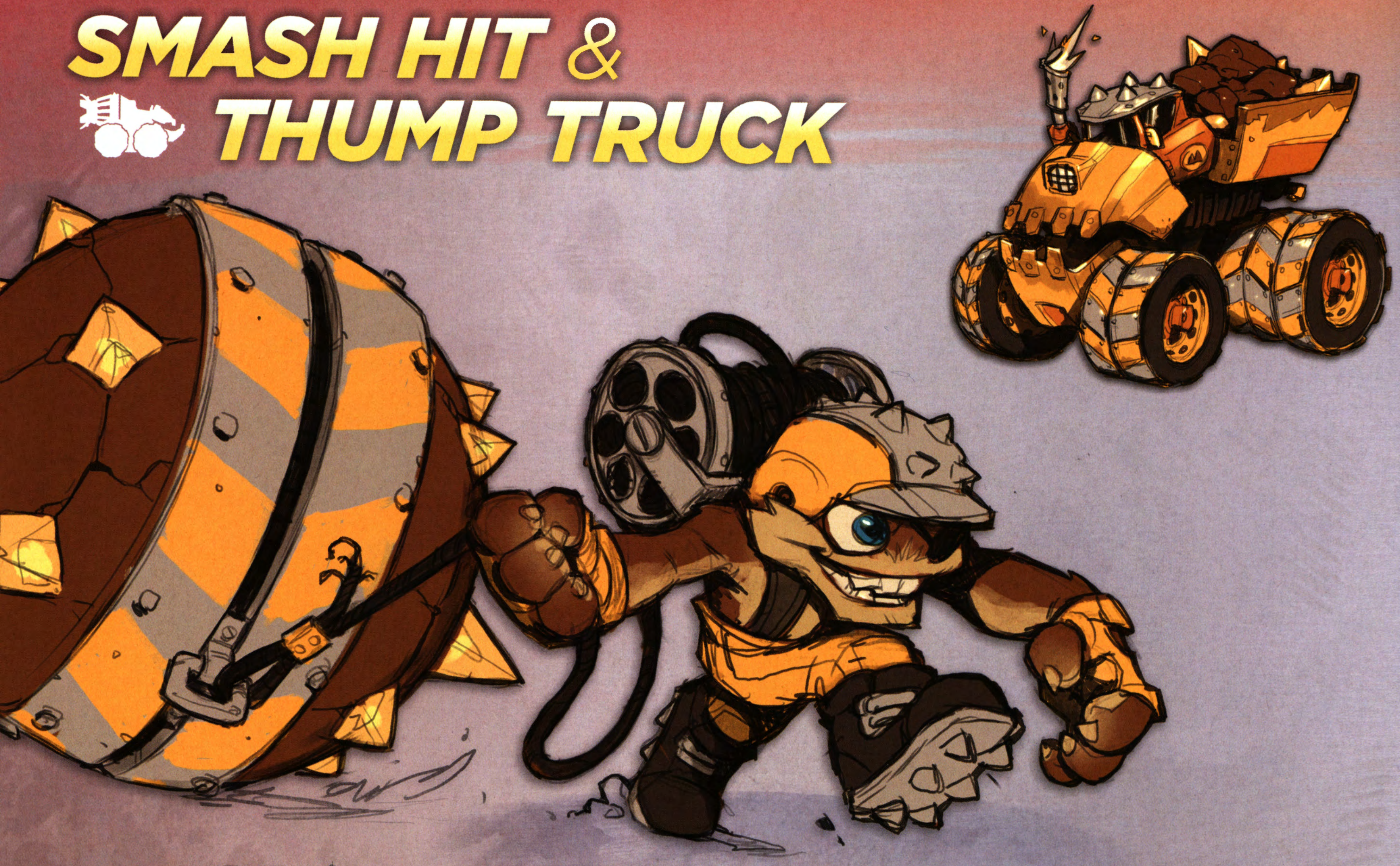


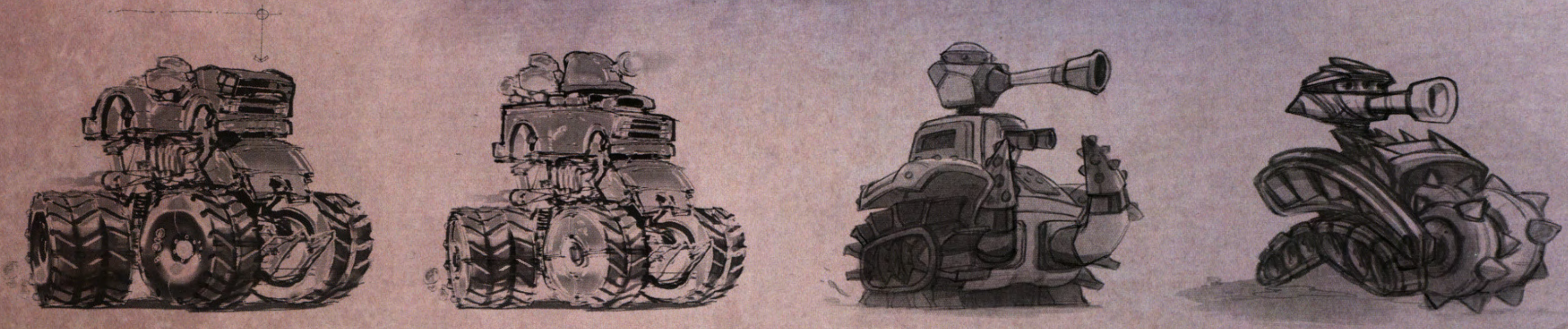


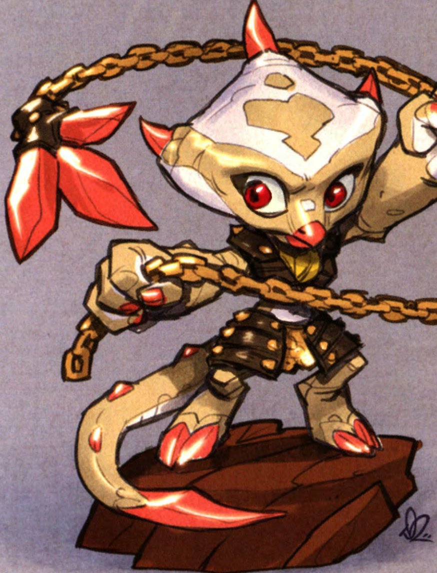
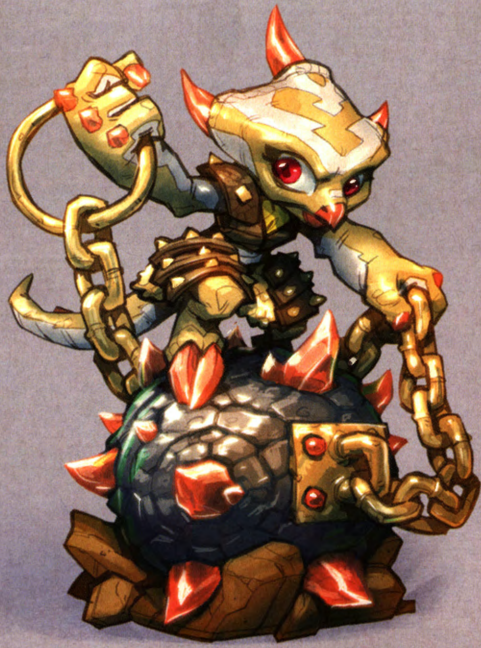
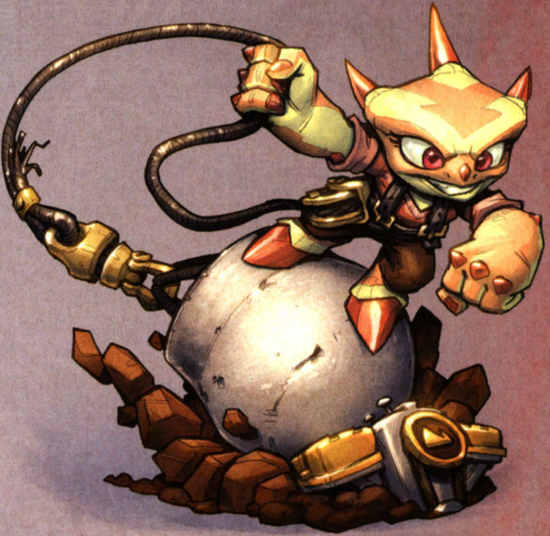
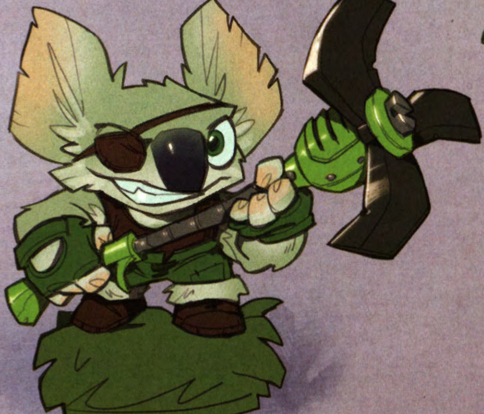
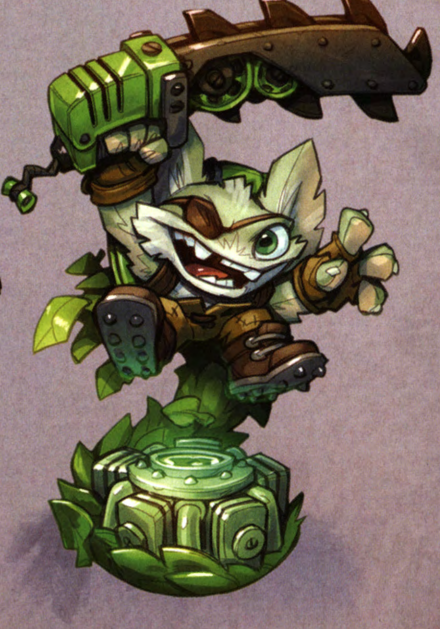
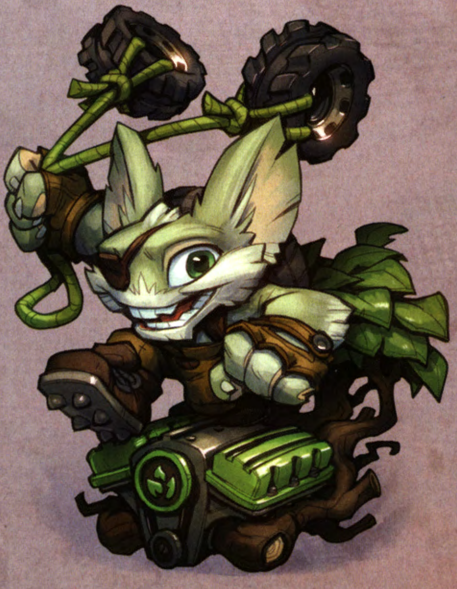
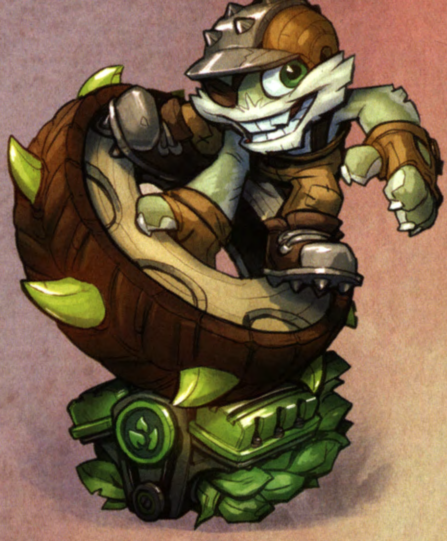


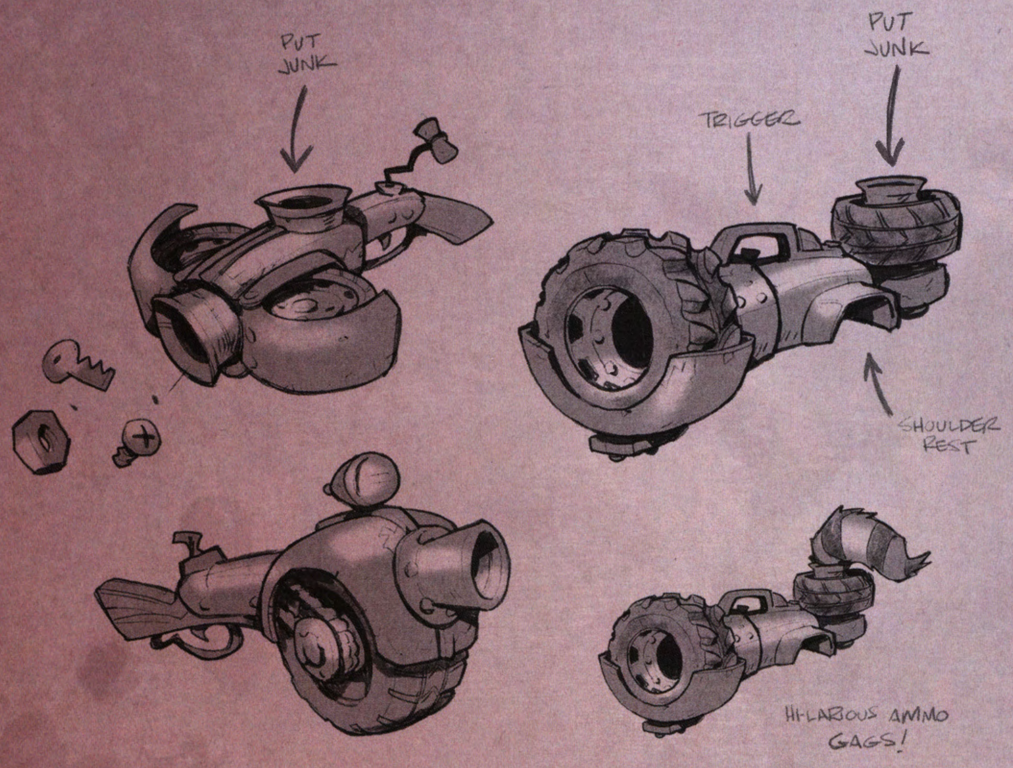


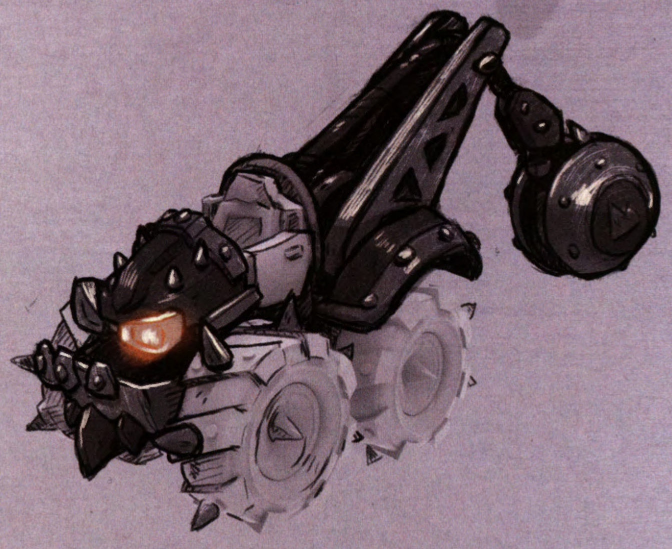
SMASH HIT & THUMP TRUCK

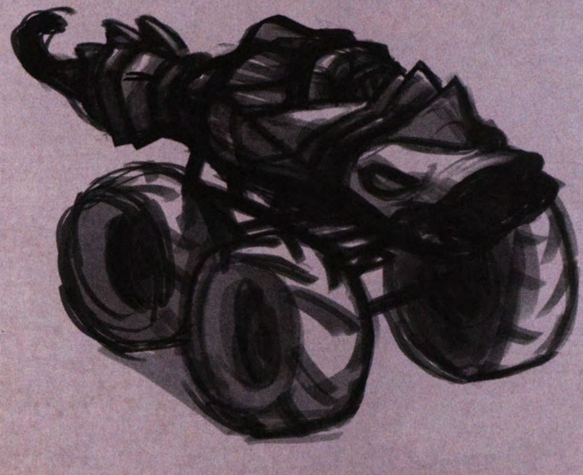


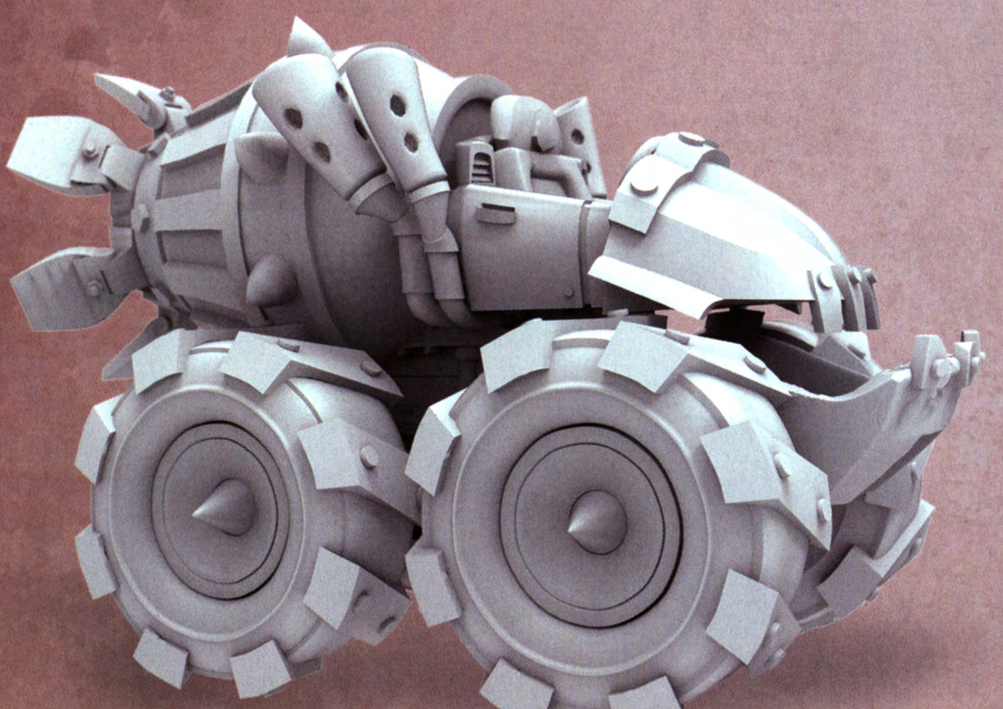


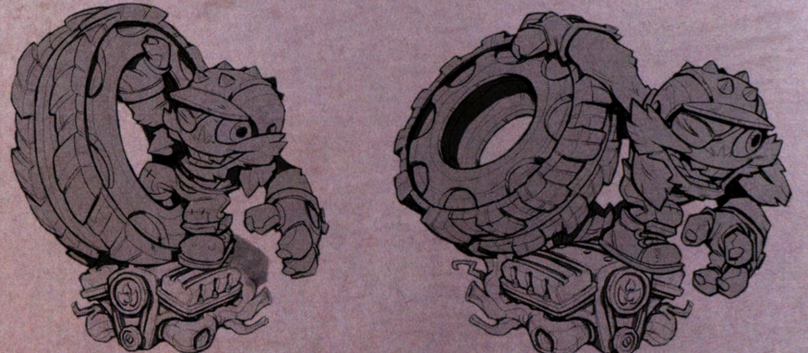








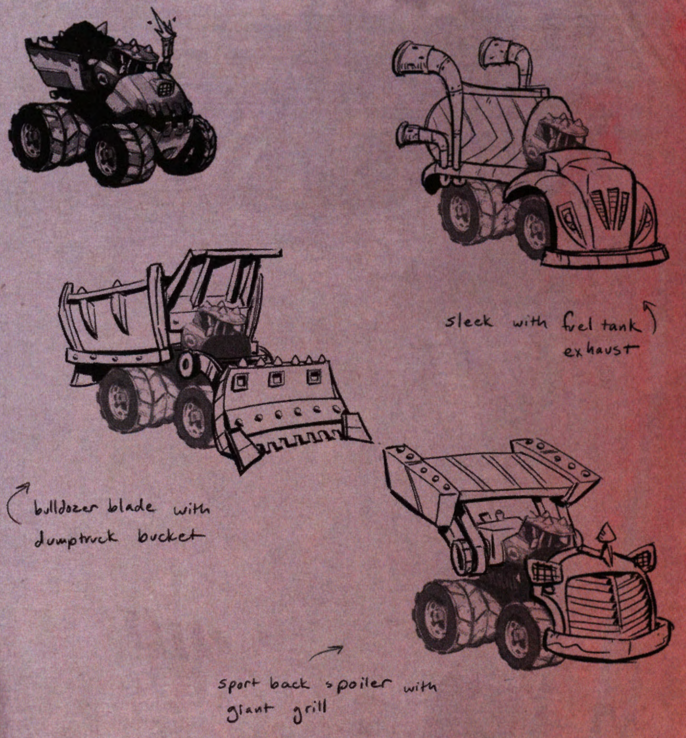

PUT JUNK
TRIGGER
PUT JUNK
SHOULDER REST
HI-LARIOUS AMMO GAGS!







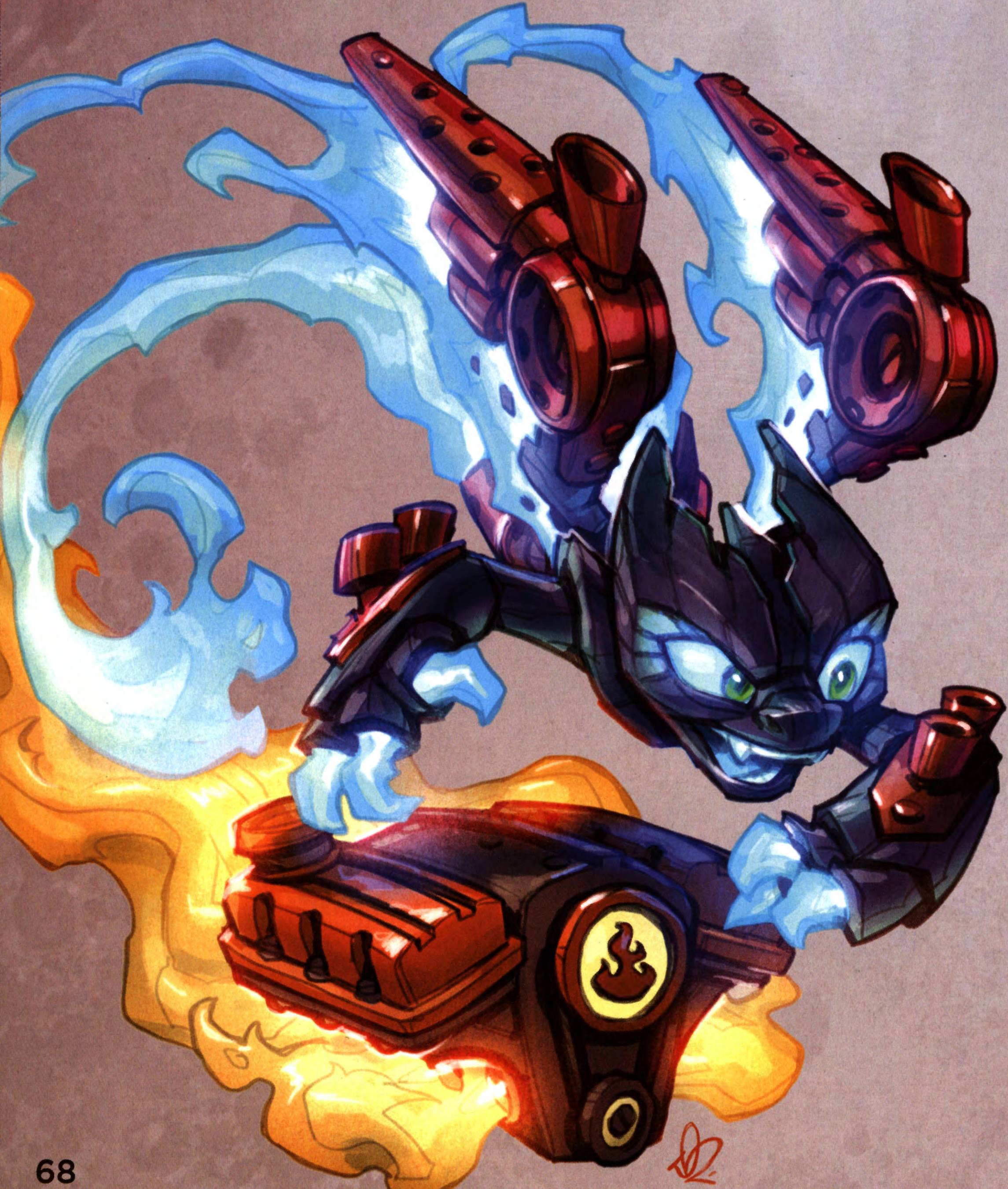


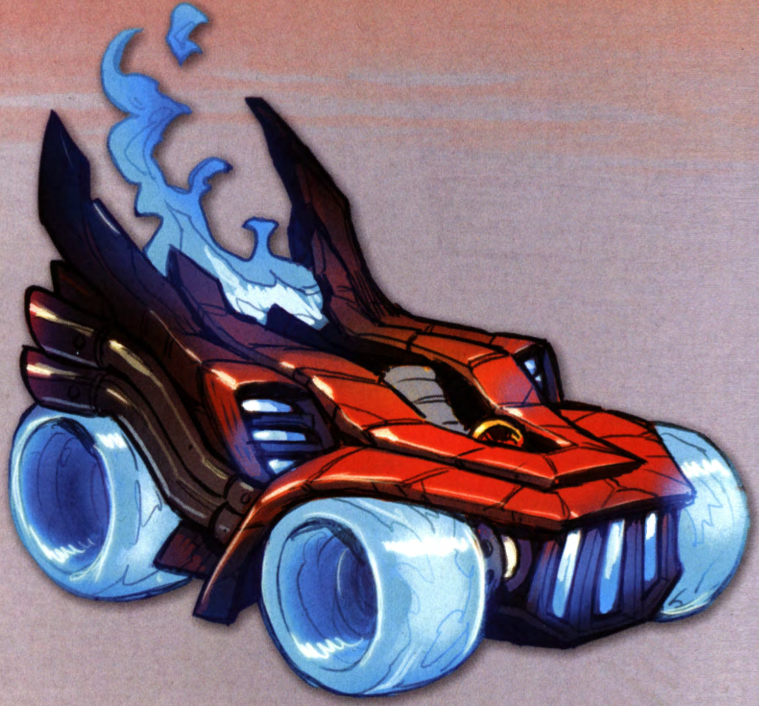

sleek with fuel tank exhaust
bulldozer blade with dumptruck bucket
sport back spoiler with giant grill

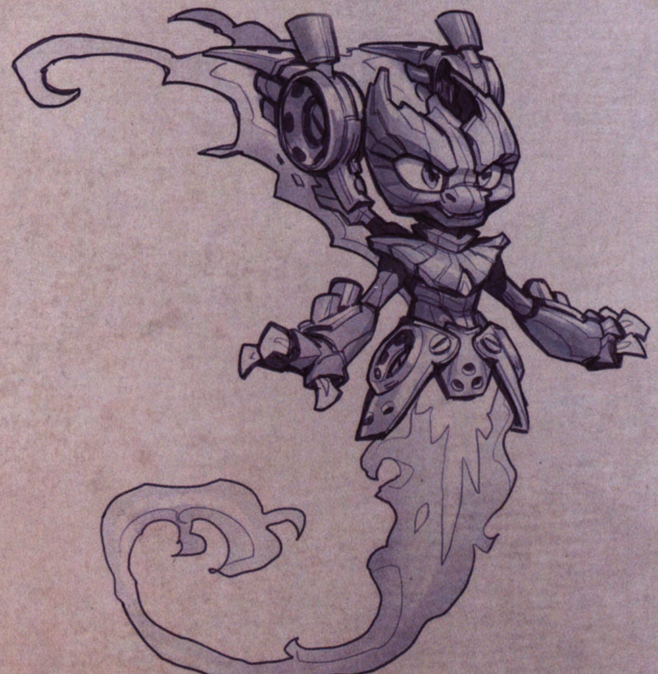
I really want to know how he lost that eye.

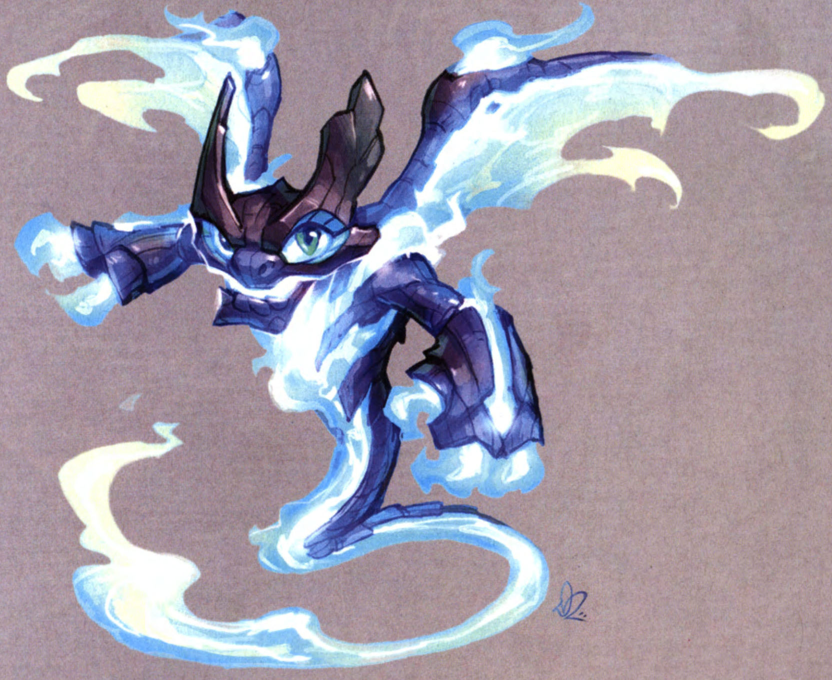
– Drew McCrory

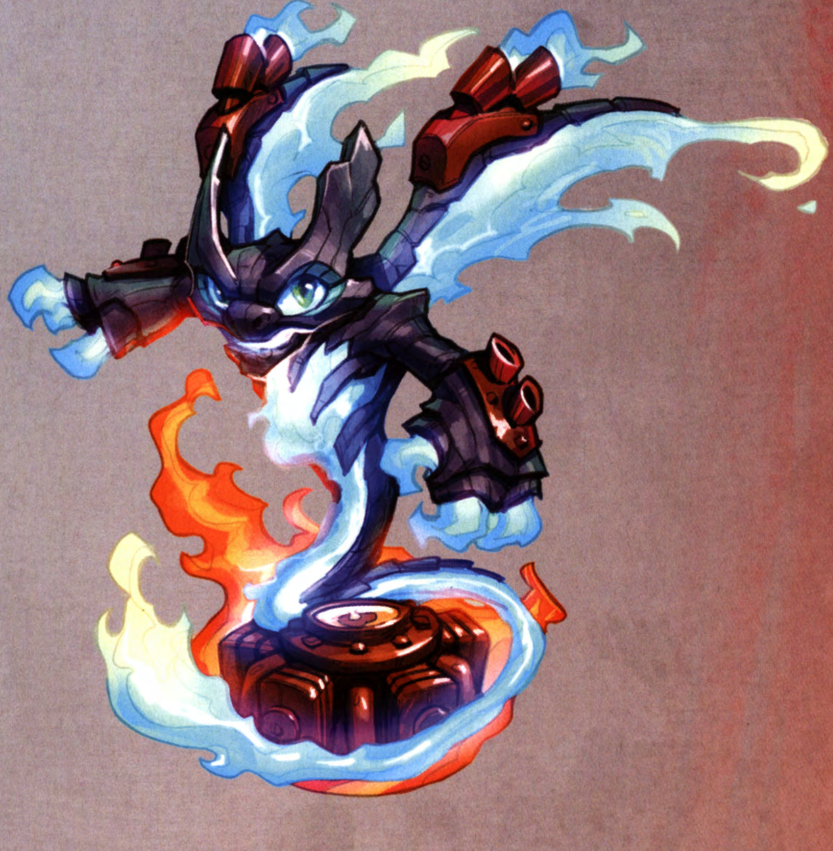
SPITFIRE & HOT STREAK

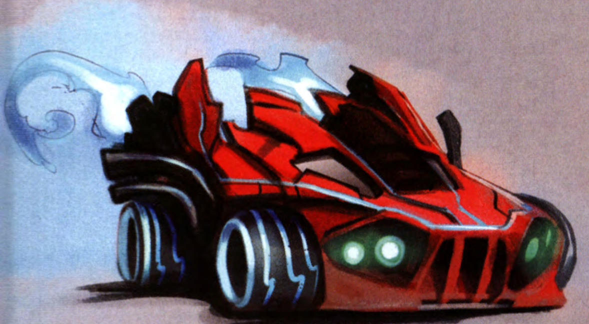


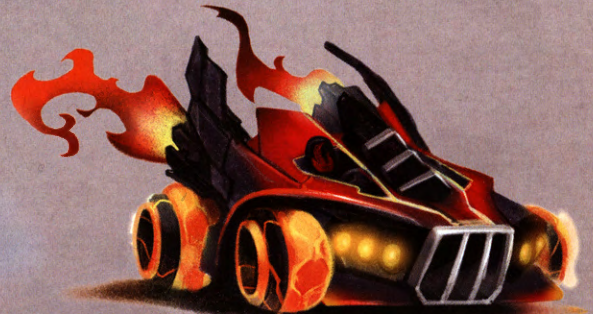


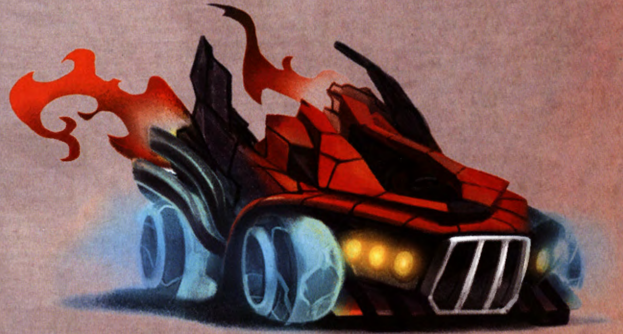


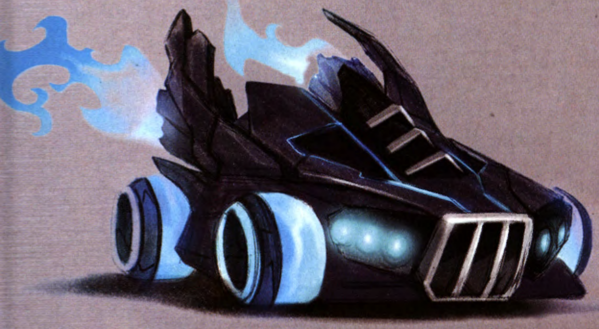


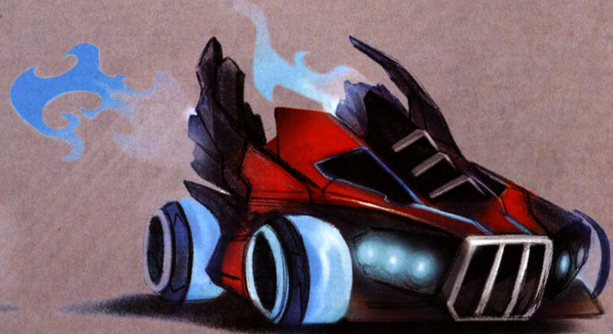


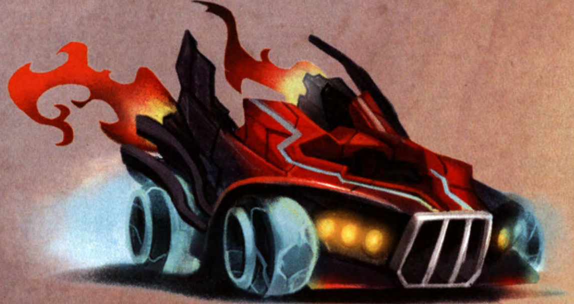






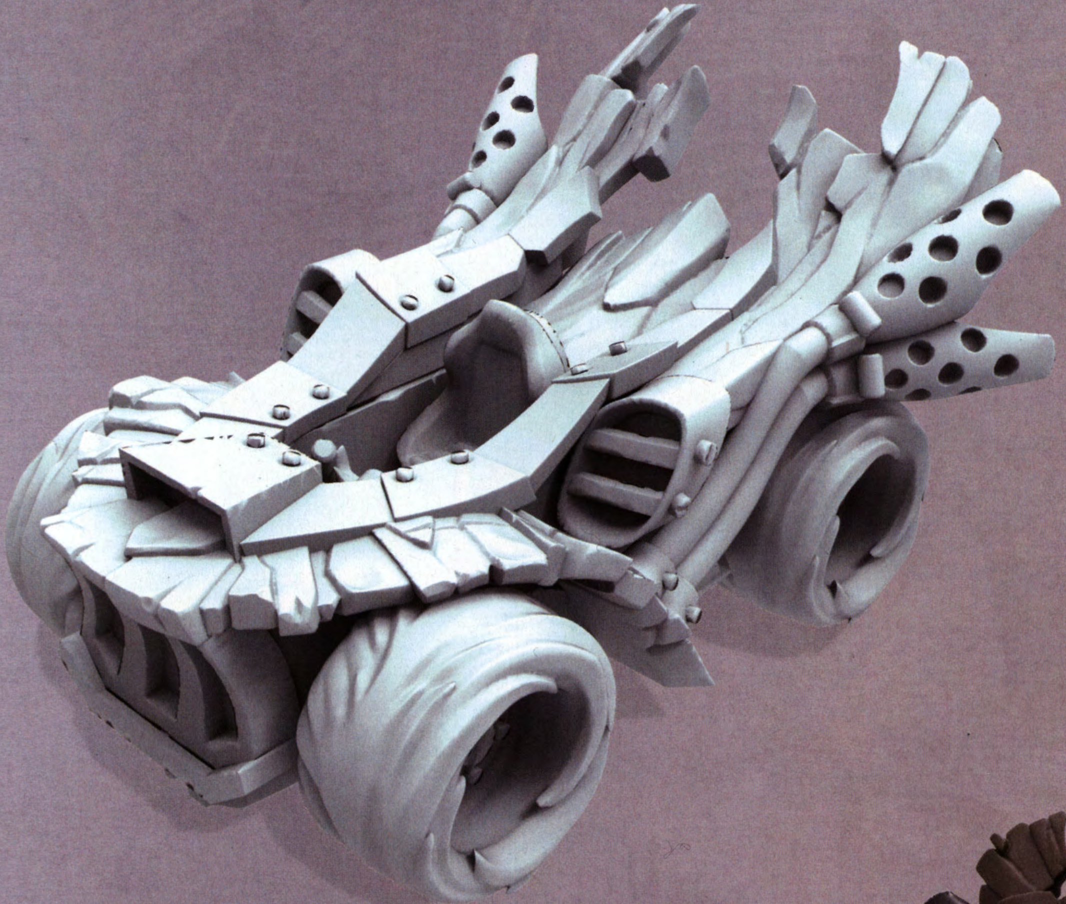


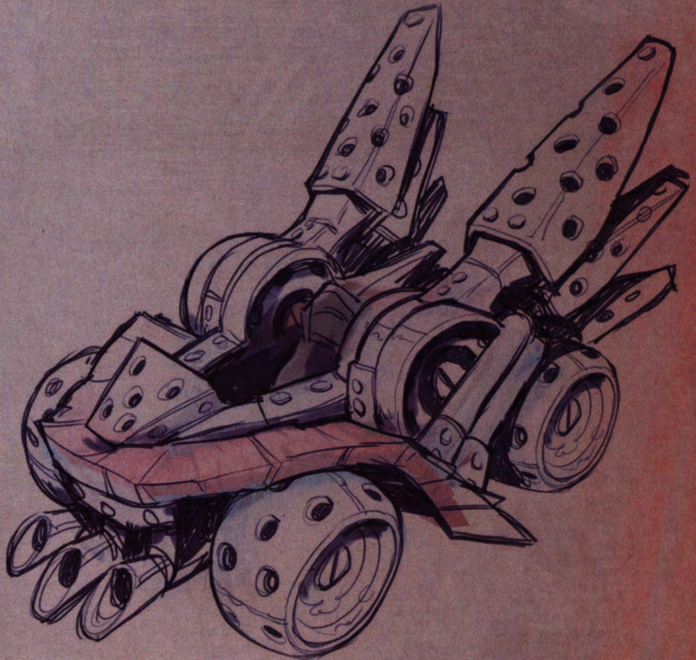


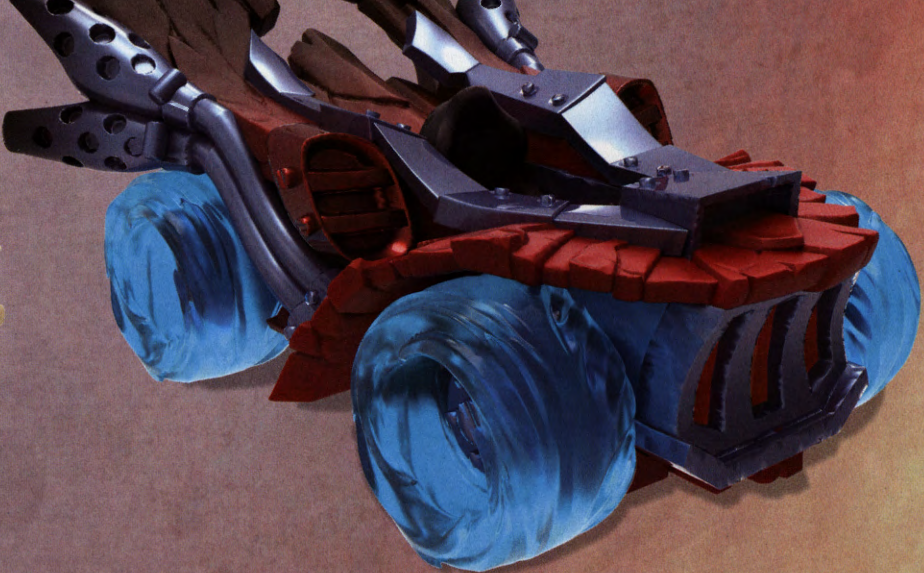


That Fire Tornado is awesome!
...Can we have two?

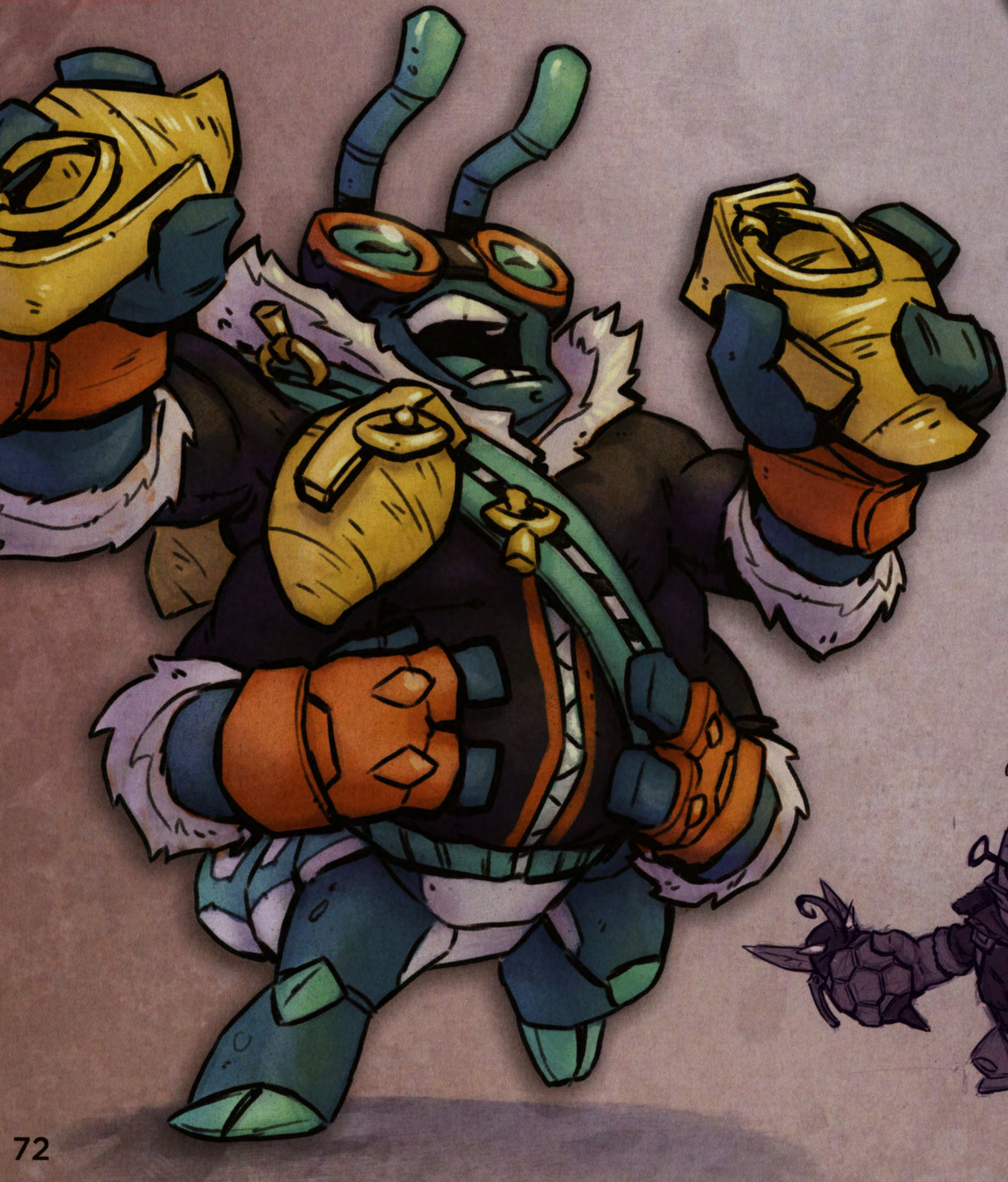
– Bill Castagna

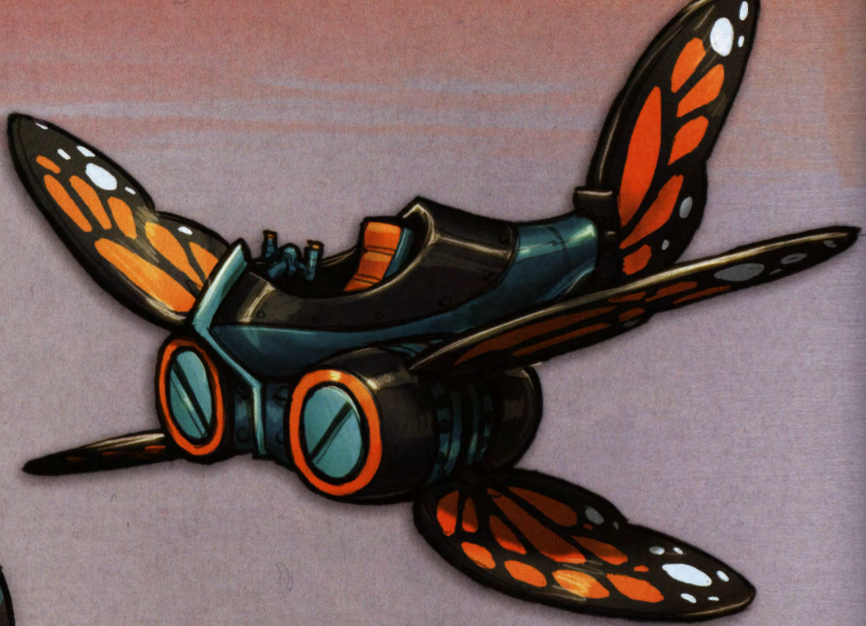


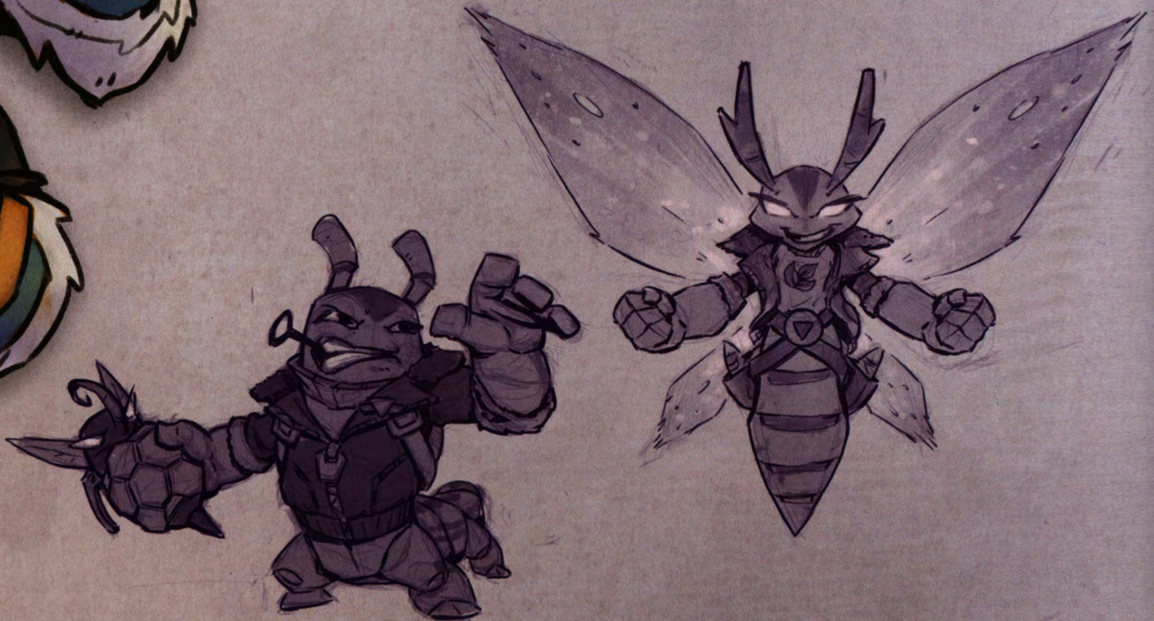


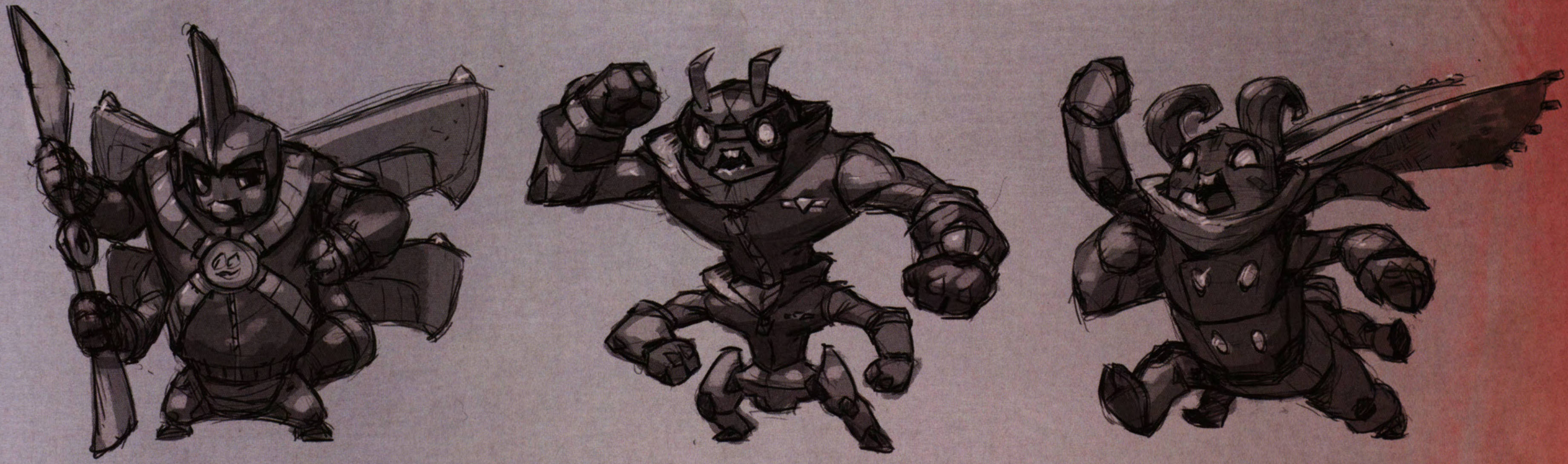


THRILLIPEDE & BUZZ WING



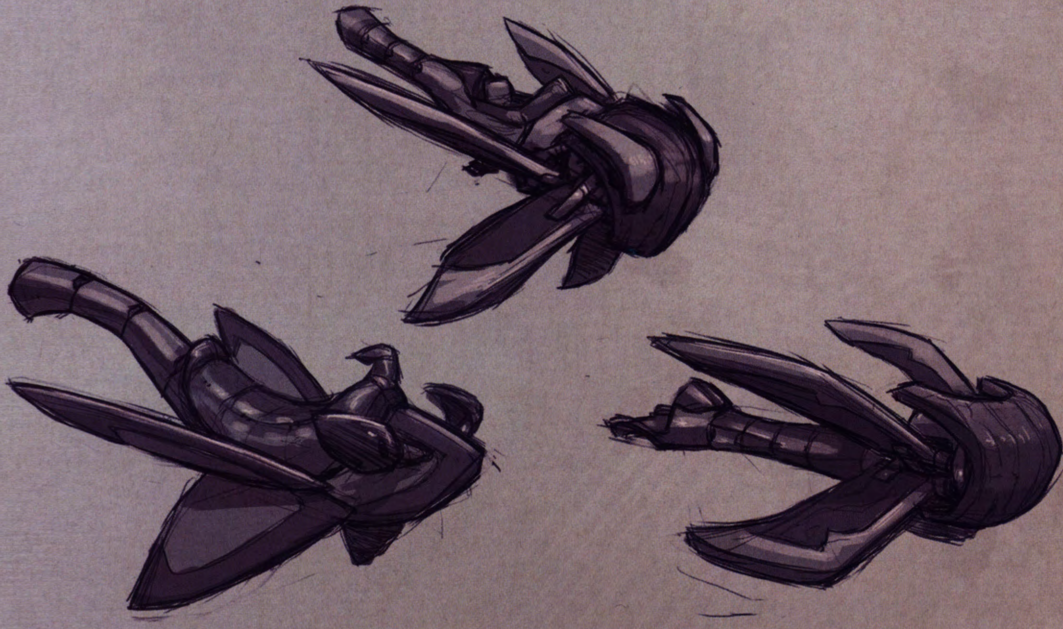


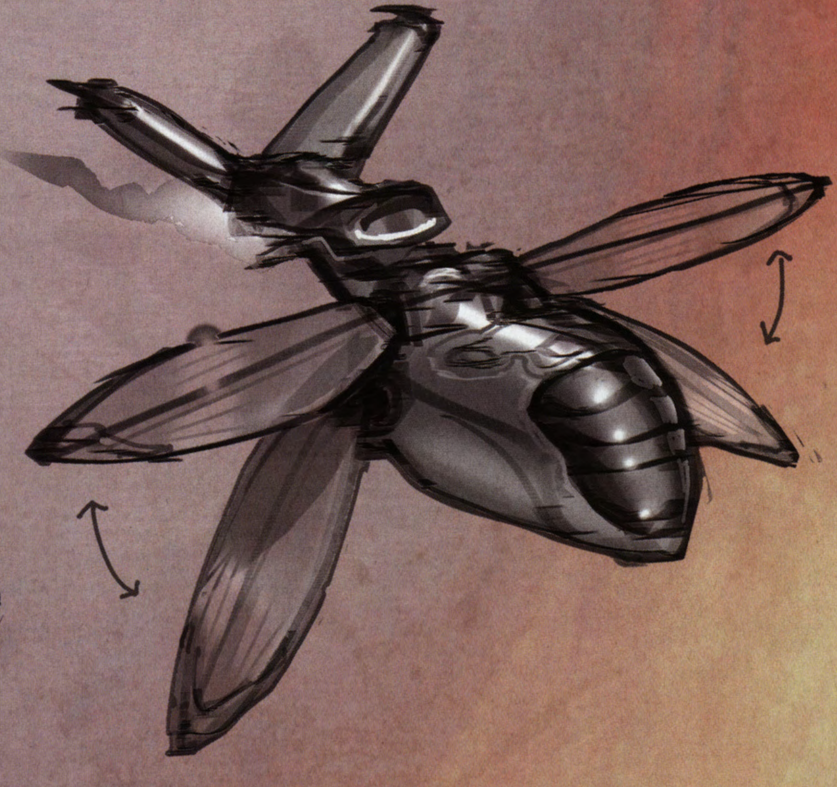


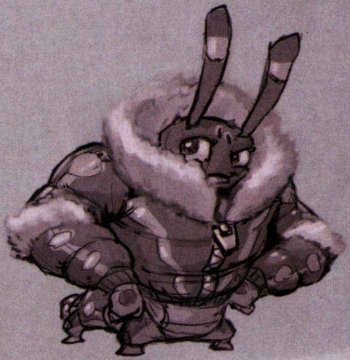


Being able to see the game develop in real-time, from the first concept sketch to the finished product within the game was brilliant.

– Daniel Rositano

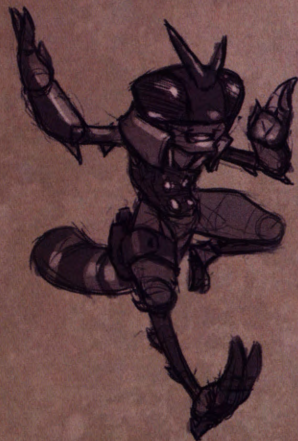


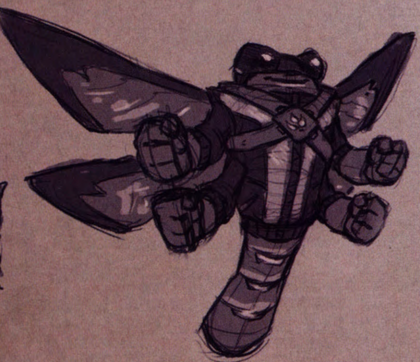


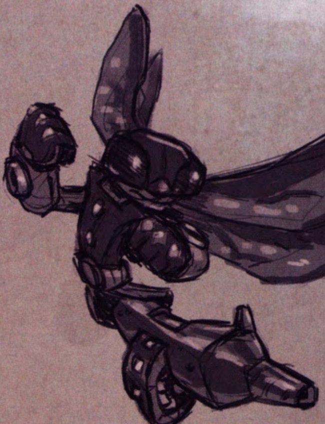


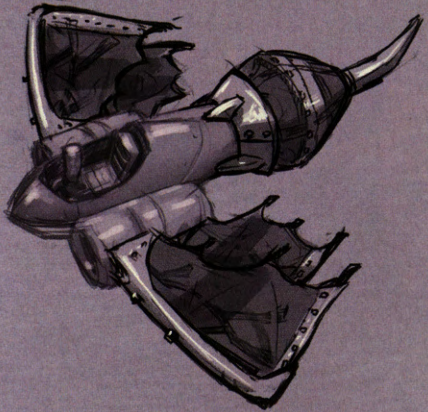
He's like a pitching machine...
for grenades.

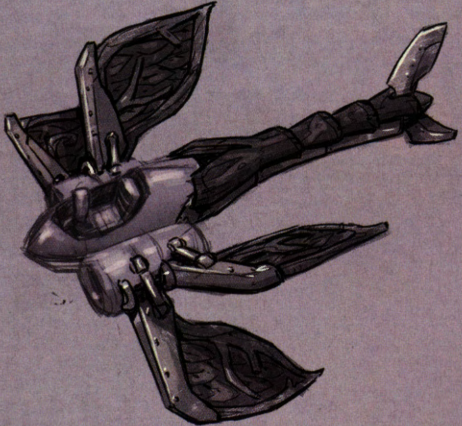
– David A. Rodriguez

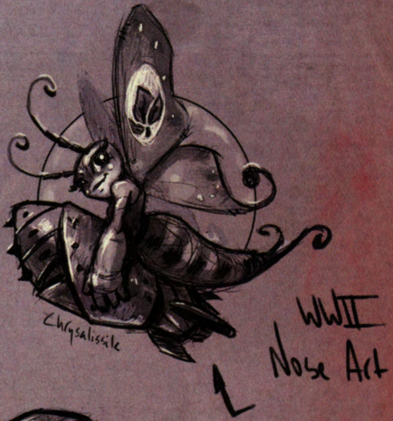


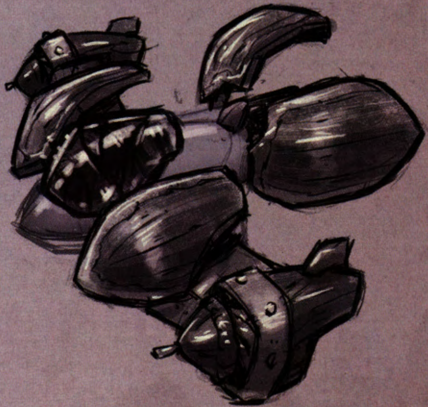


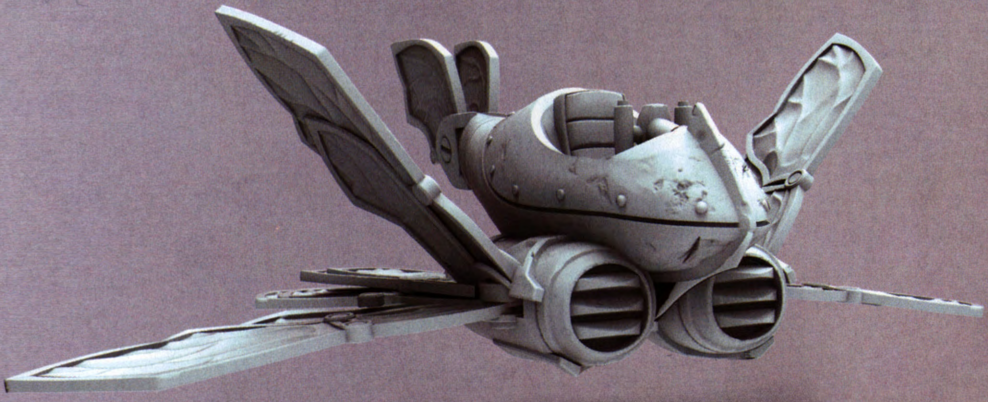


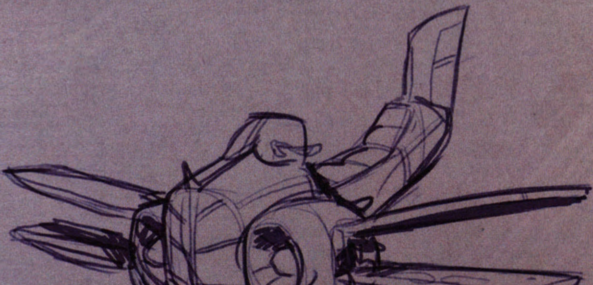




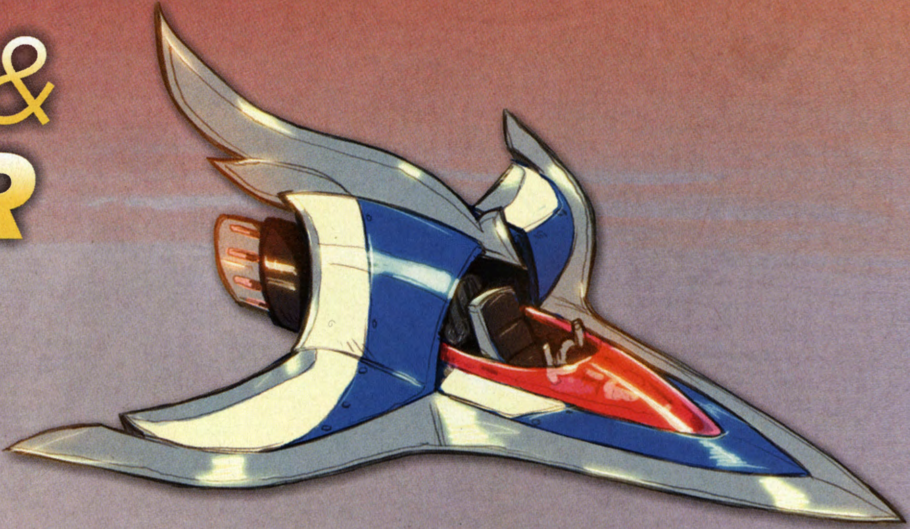

Chrysalissile
WWII
Nose Art

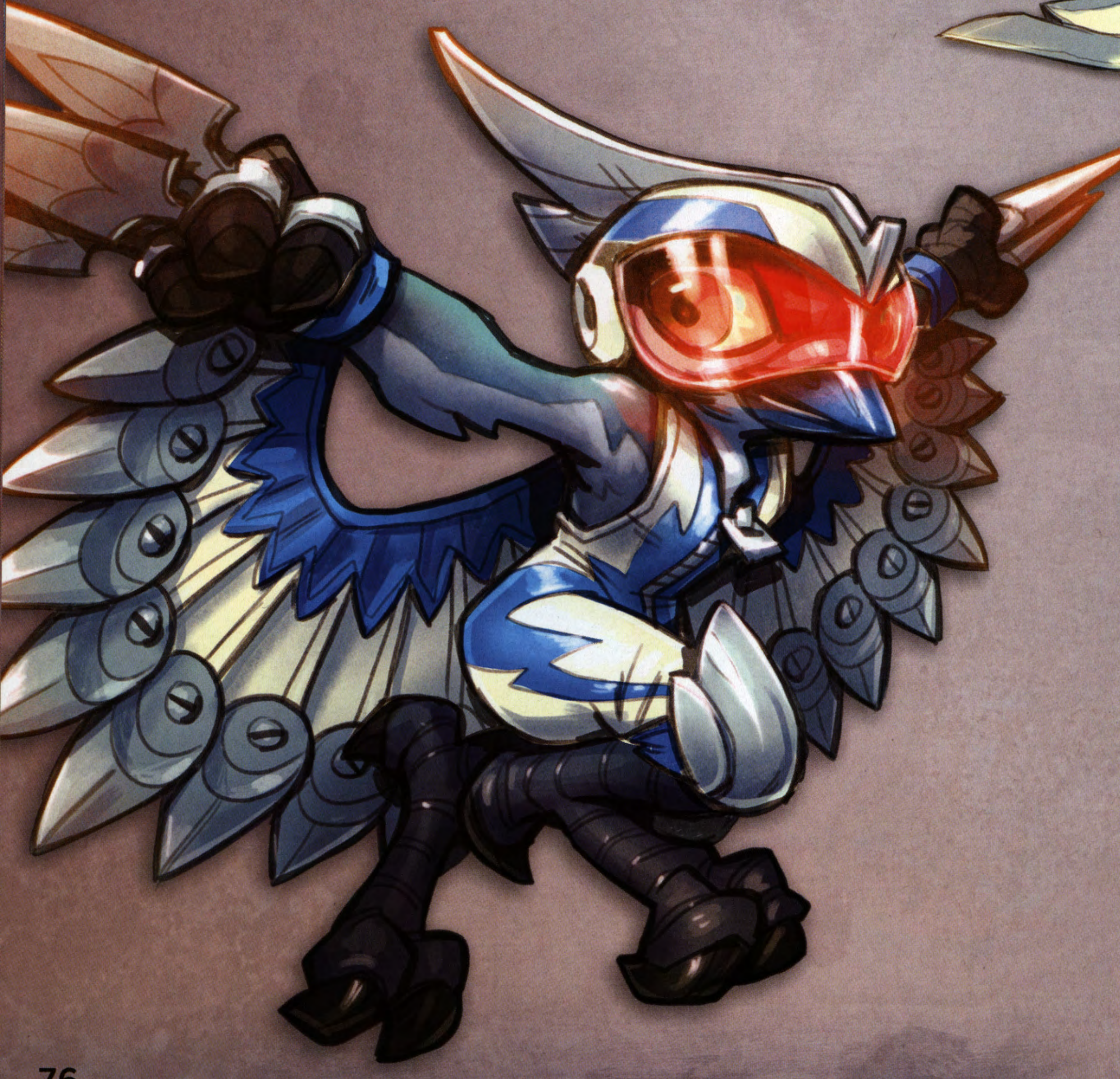


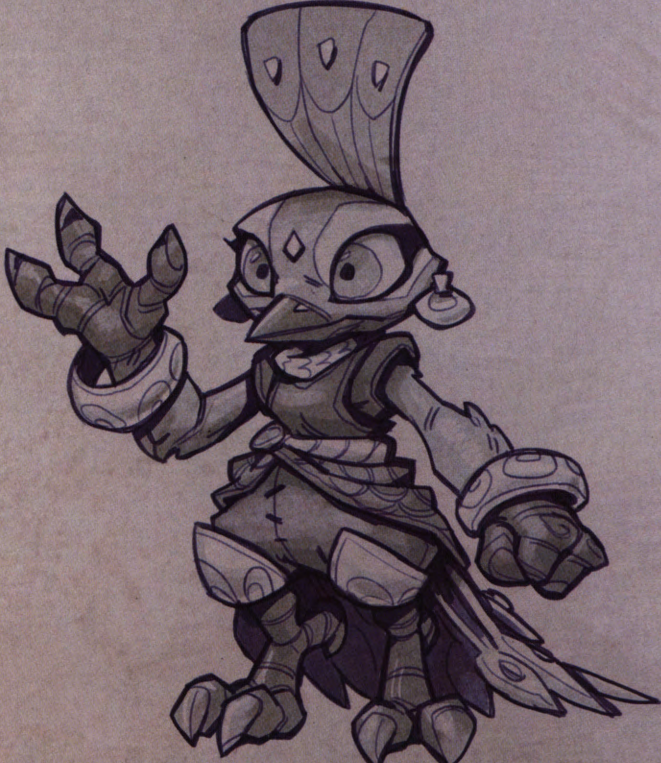


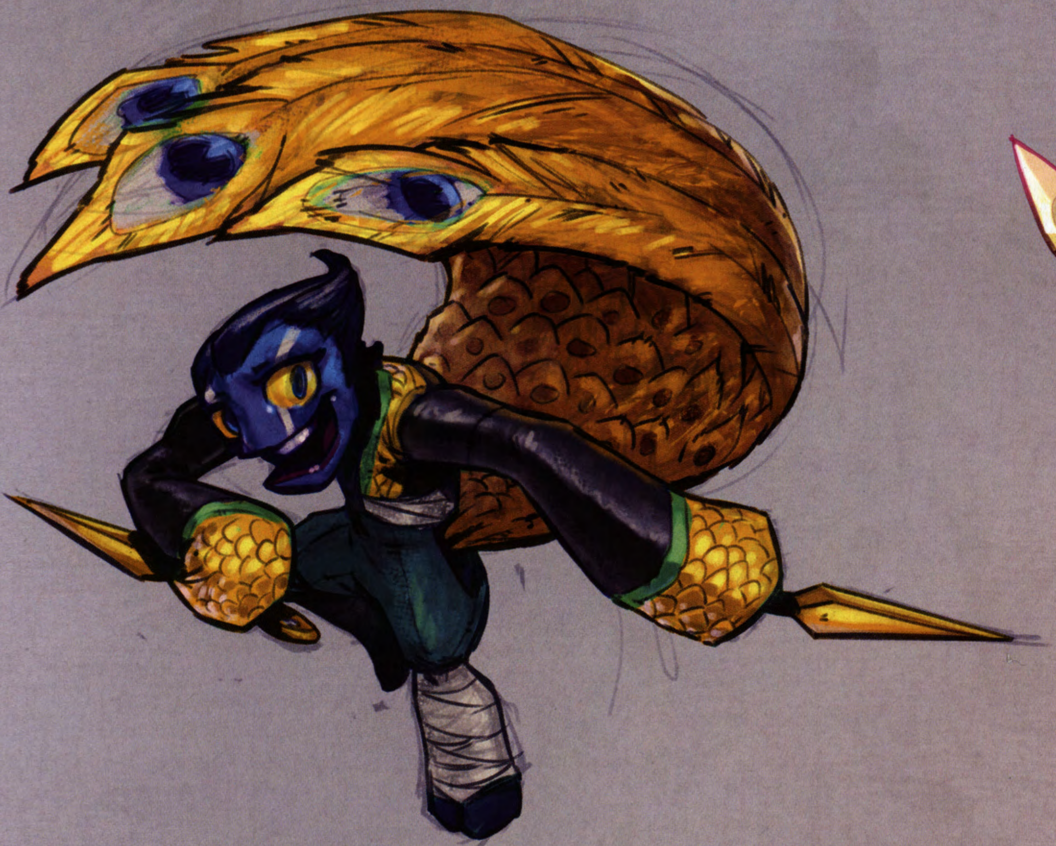


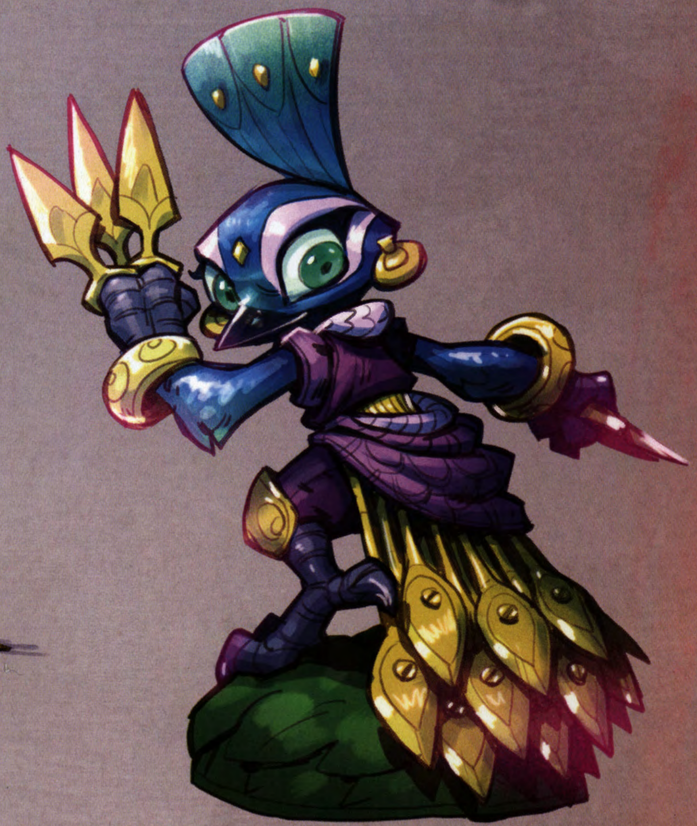
STORMBLADE & SKY SLICER





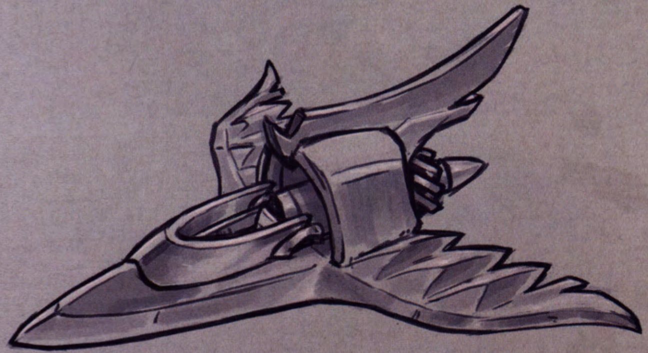


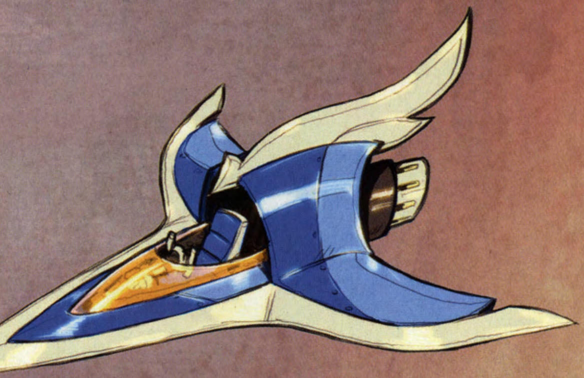


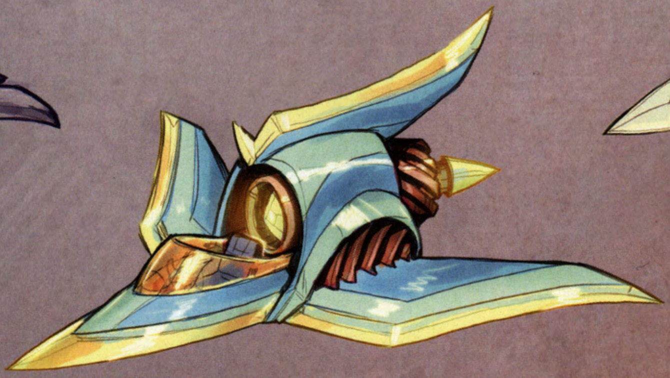


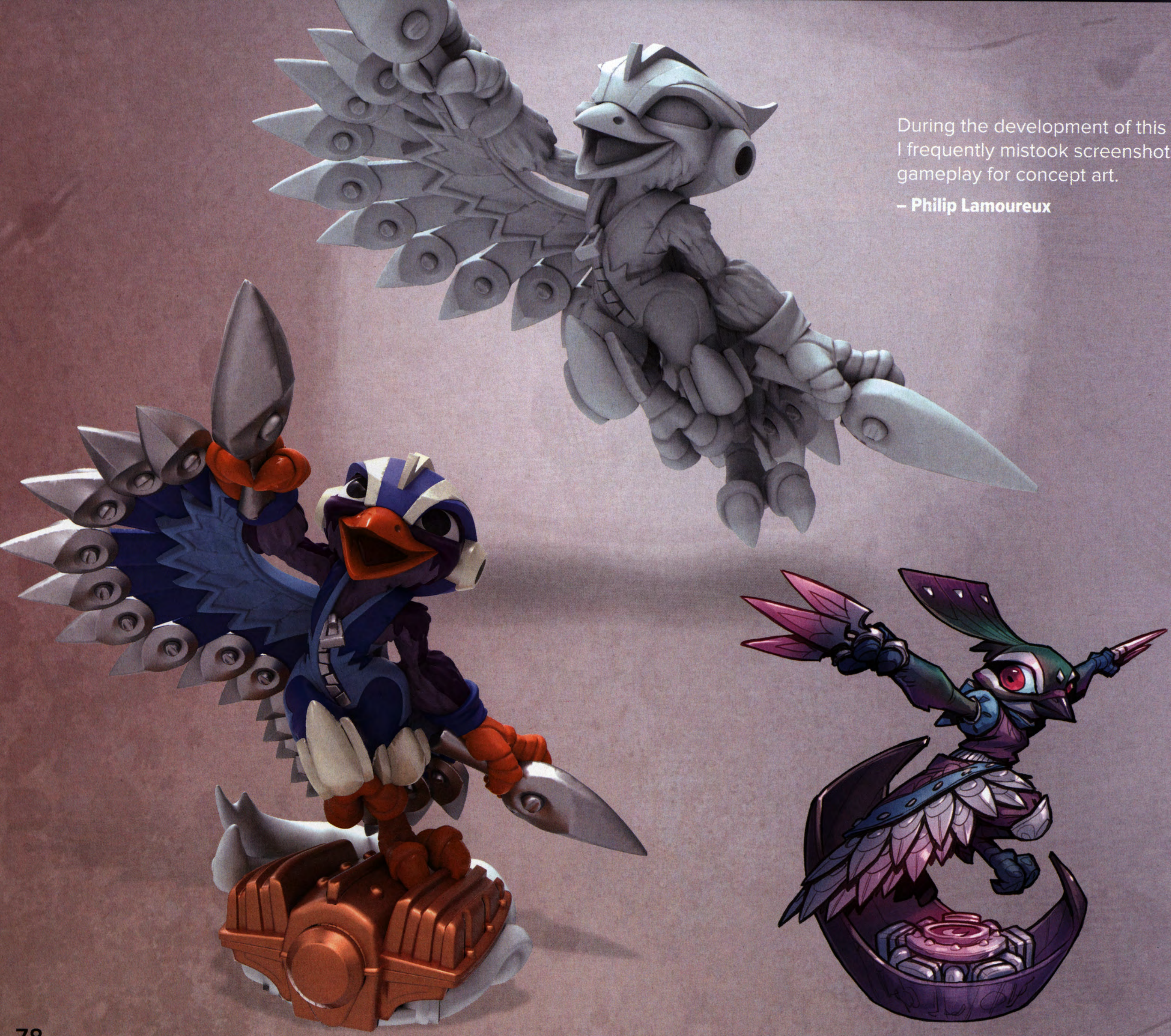
Every time a new piece of concept art was shown off, my jaw would just drop. Then you would see that show up in the game just as beautifully.

– Romy Cayetano



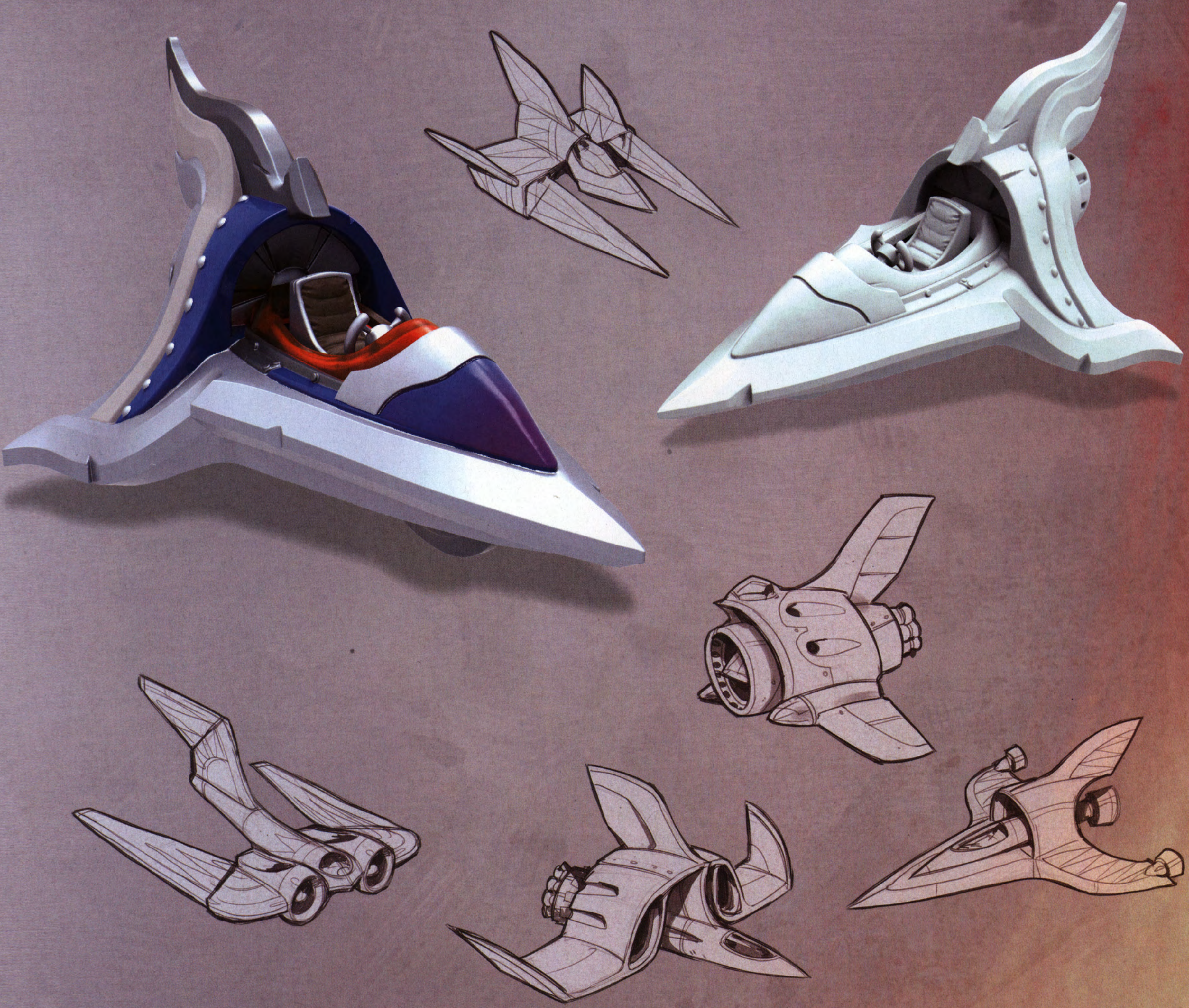






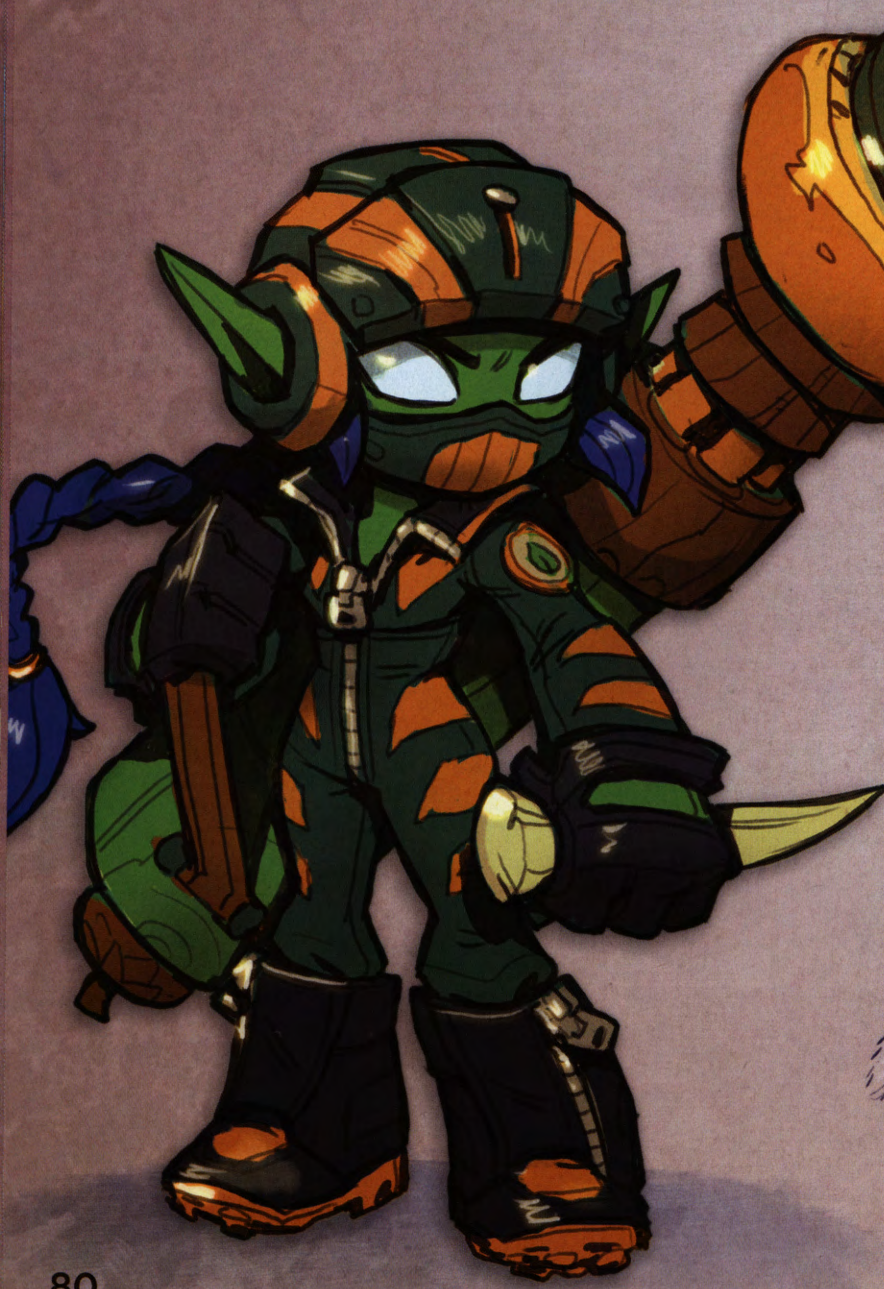
During the development of this title, I frequently mistook screenshots of gameplay for concept art.

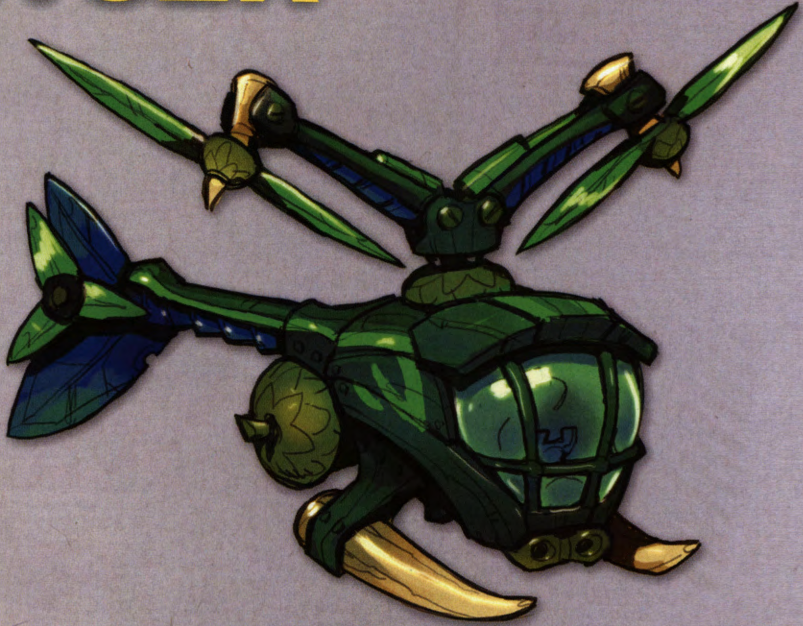
– Philip Lamoureux

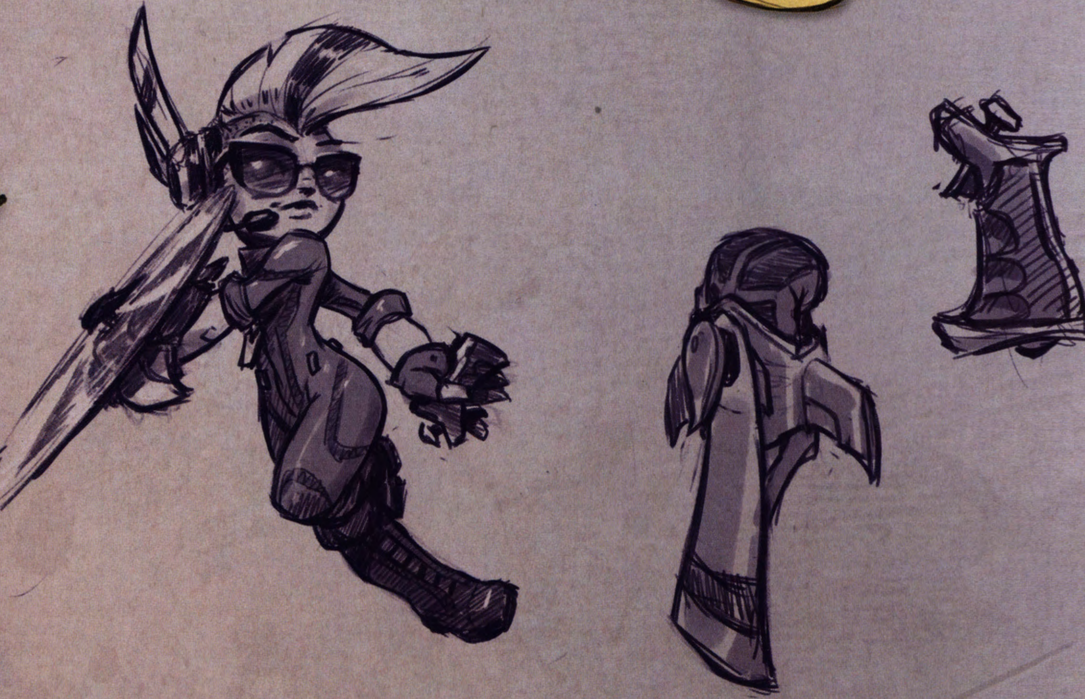


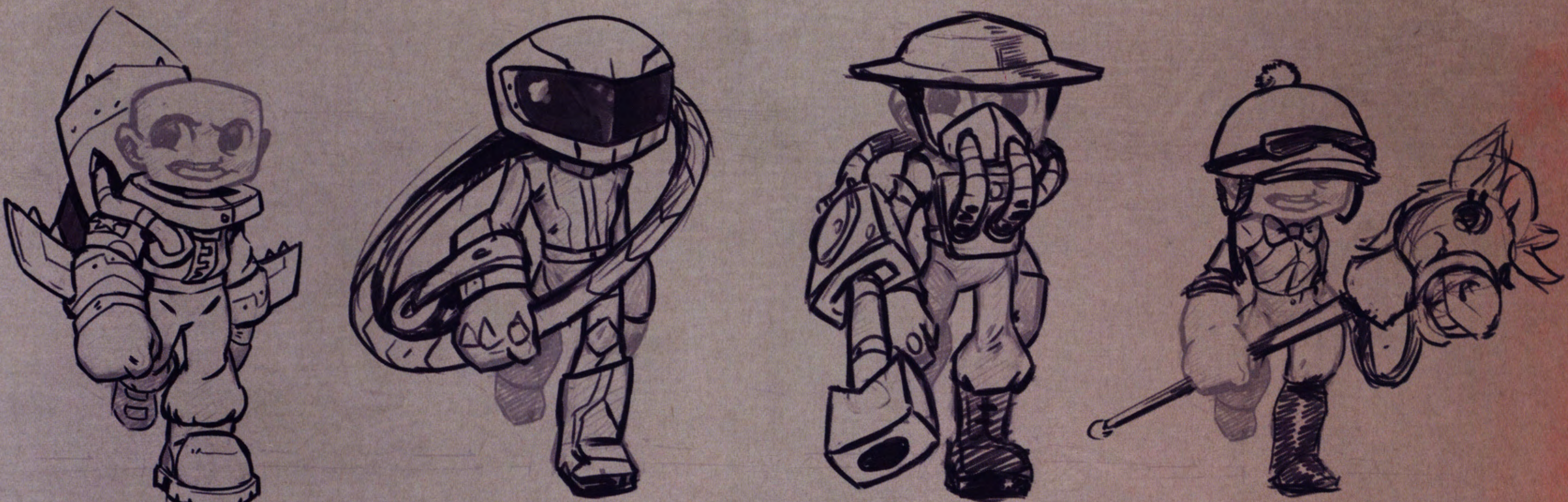
SUPER SHOT

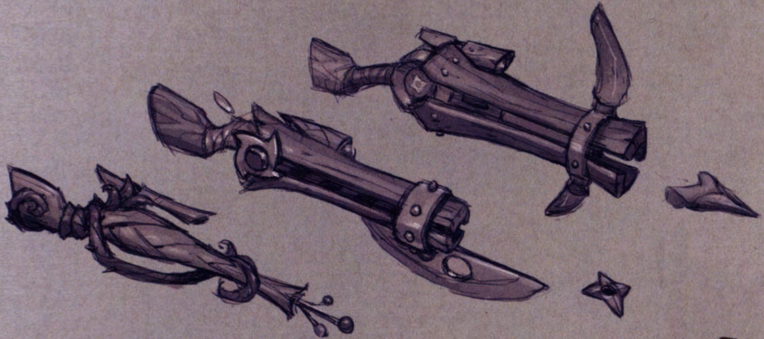
STEALTH ELF & STEALTH STINGER





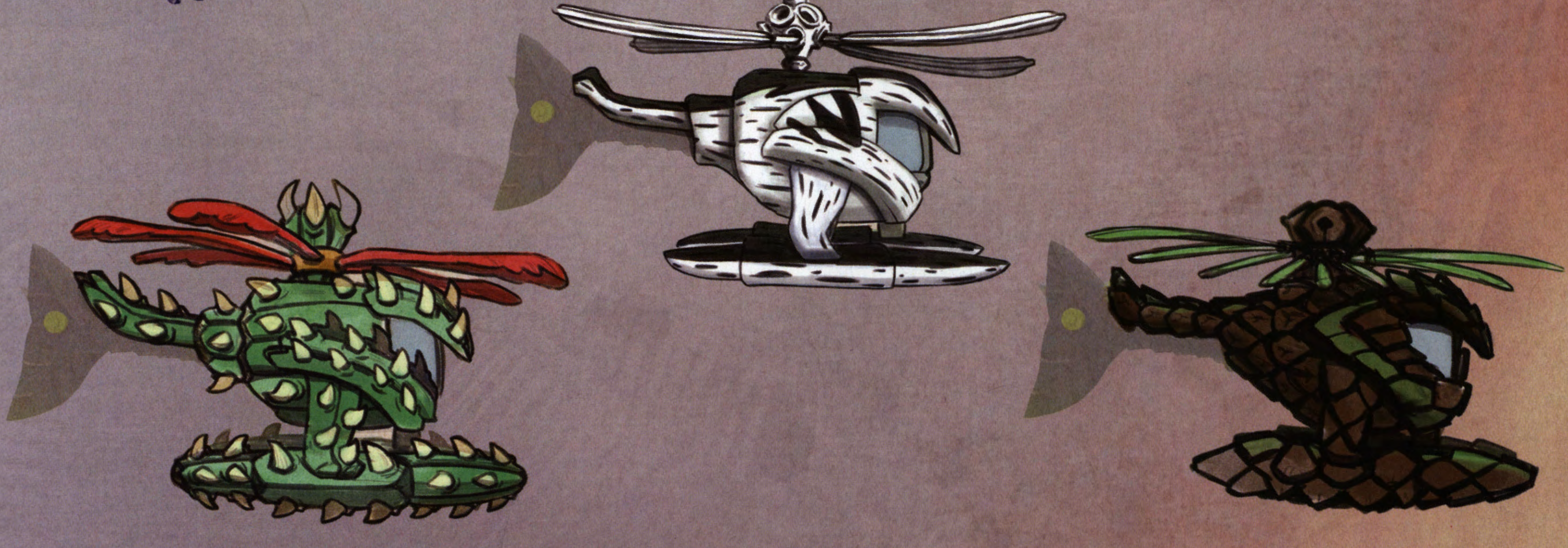


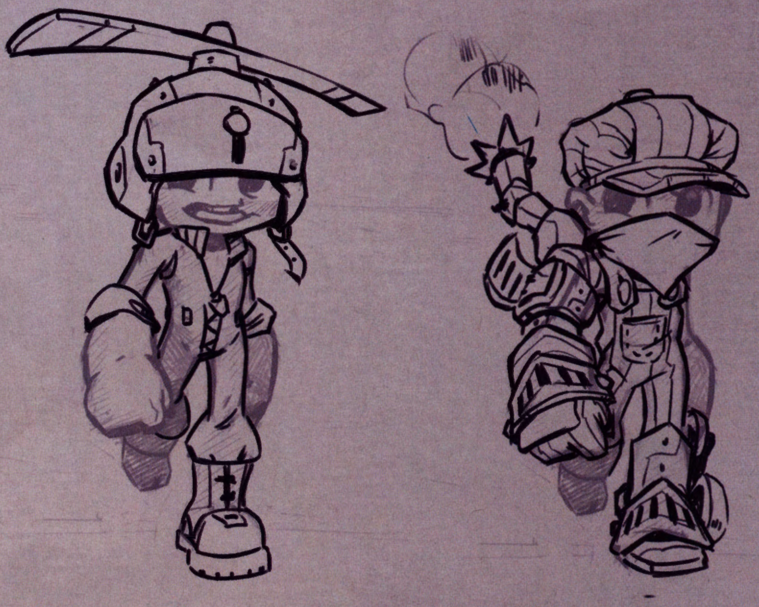


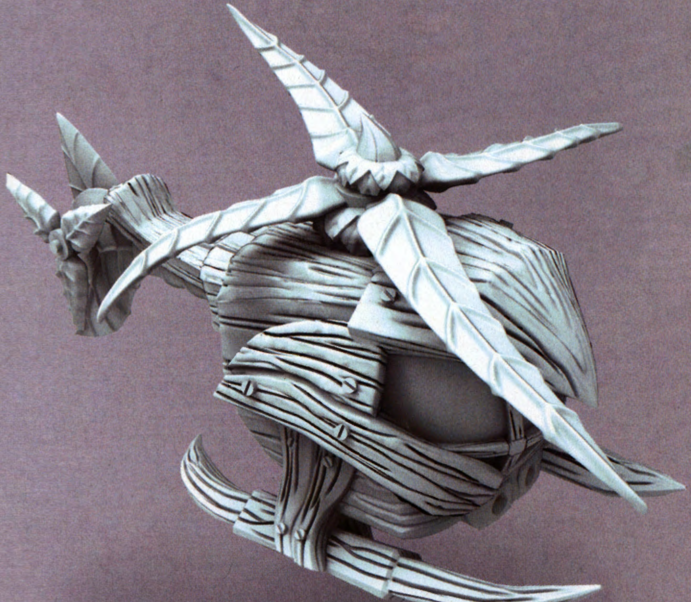


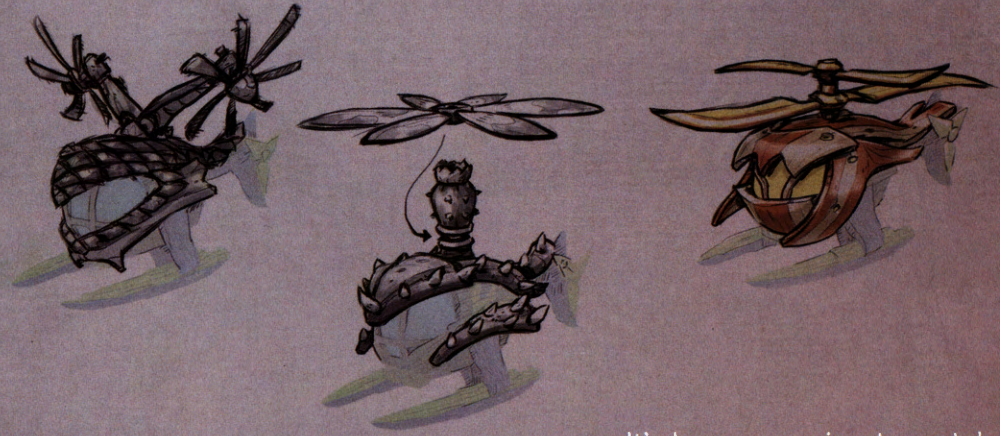
The wealth of ideas, concepts, and true possibility within this series is incredible!

– Jesse Sparhawk





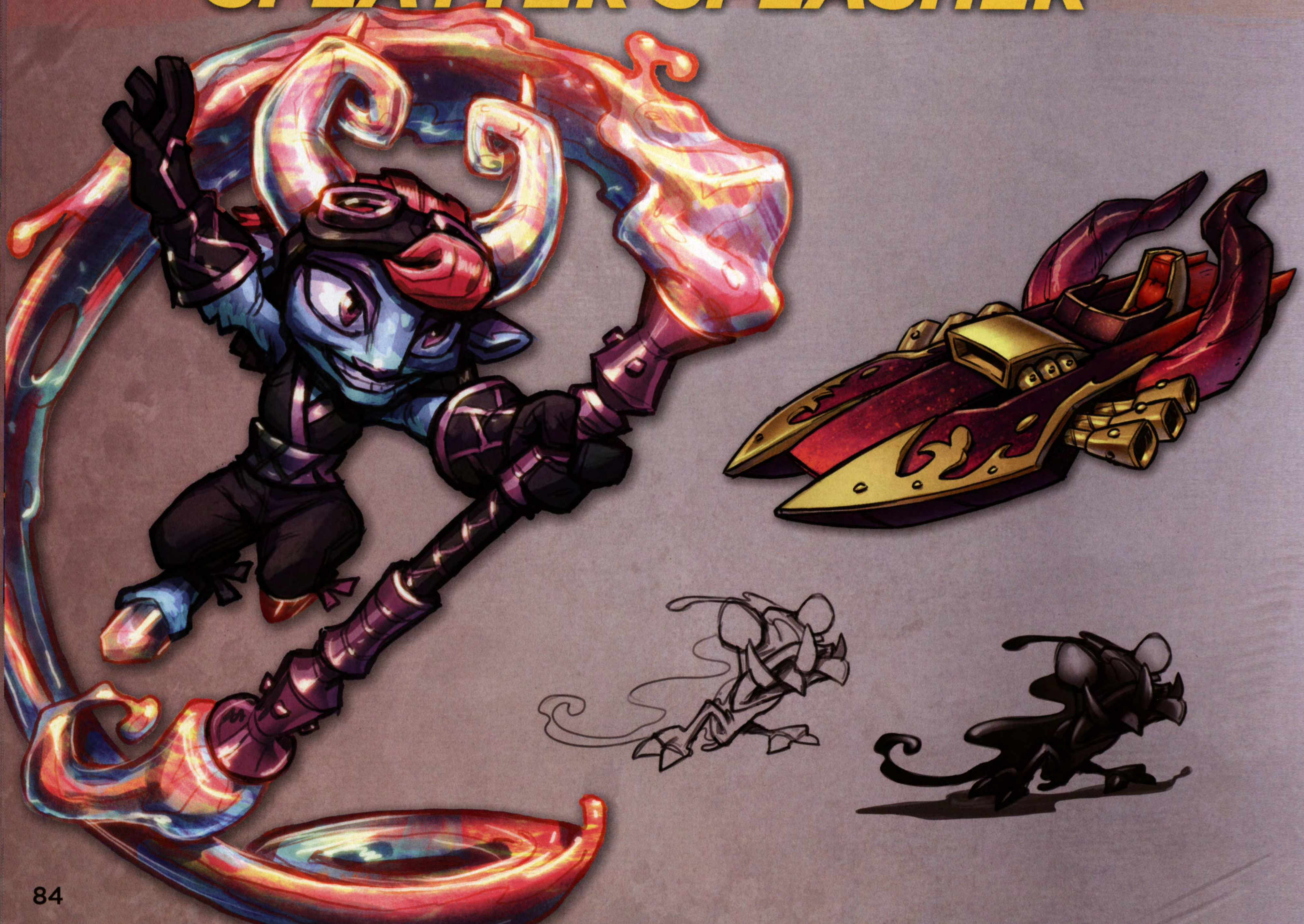


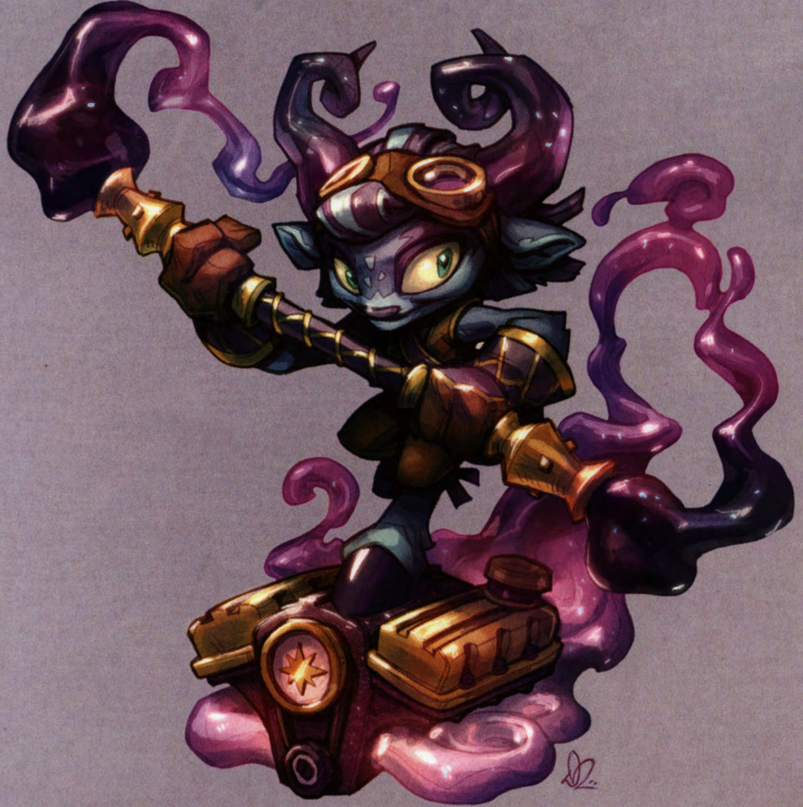


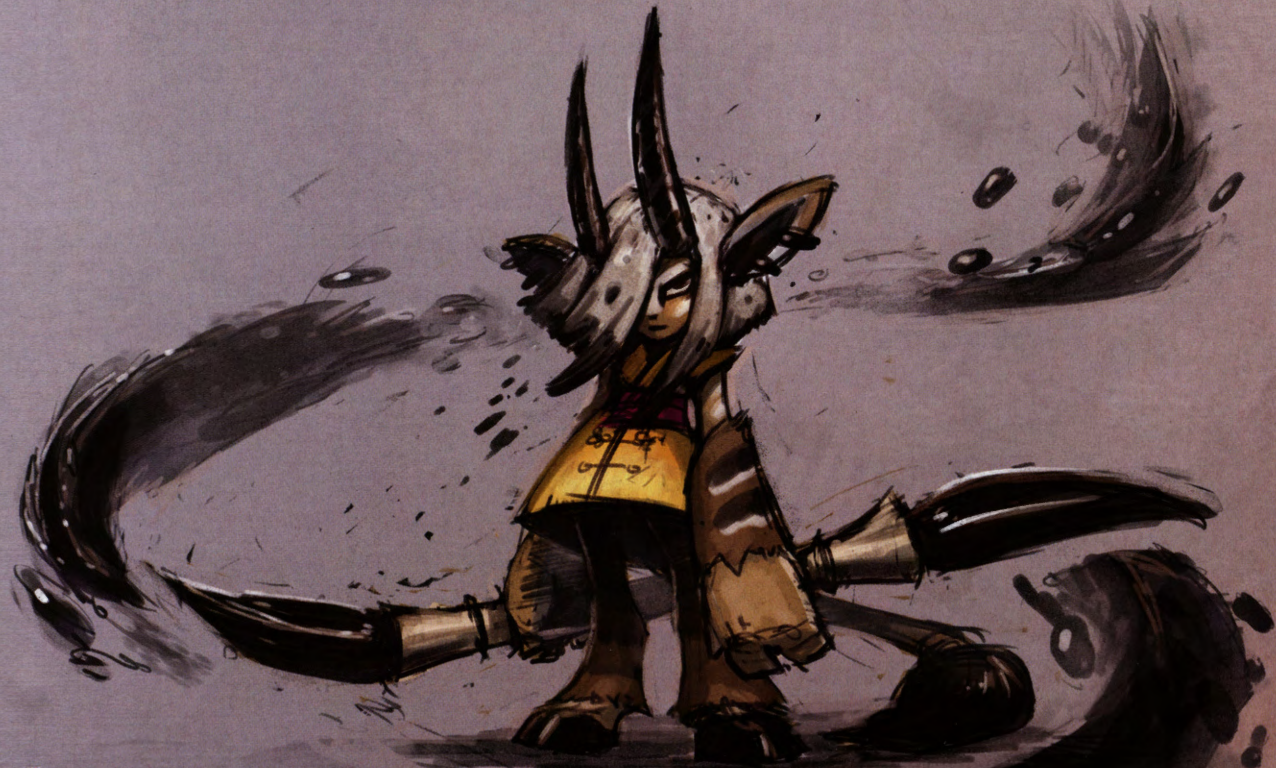
It's been amazing to watch the game evolve from sketches, to grey boxes, to the cinematic experience it is now.

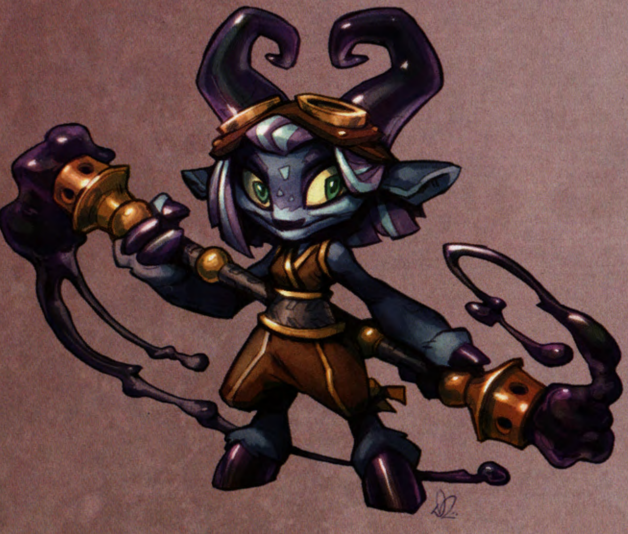
– Luke Anderson

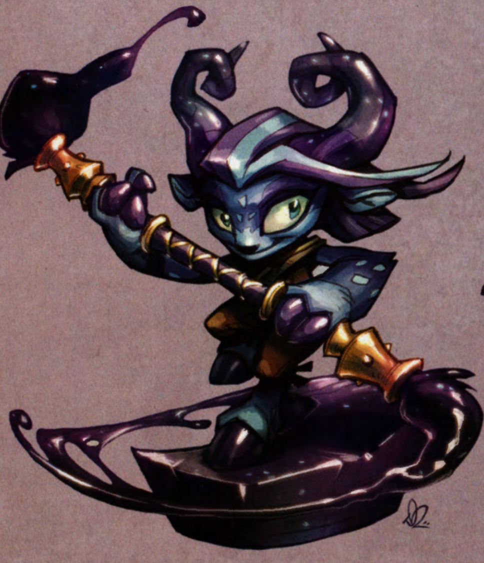
SPLAT & SPLATTER SPLASHER

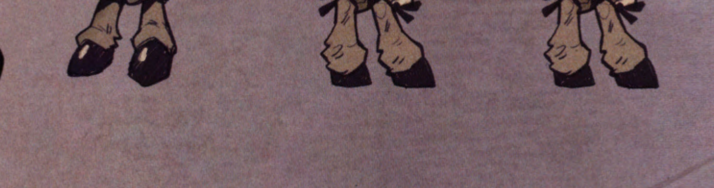






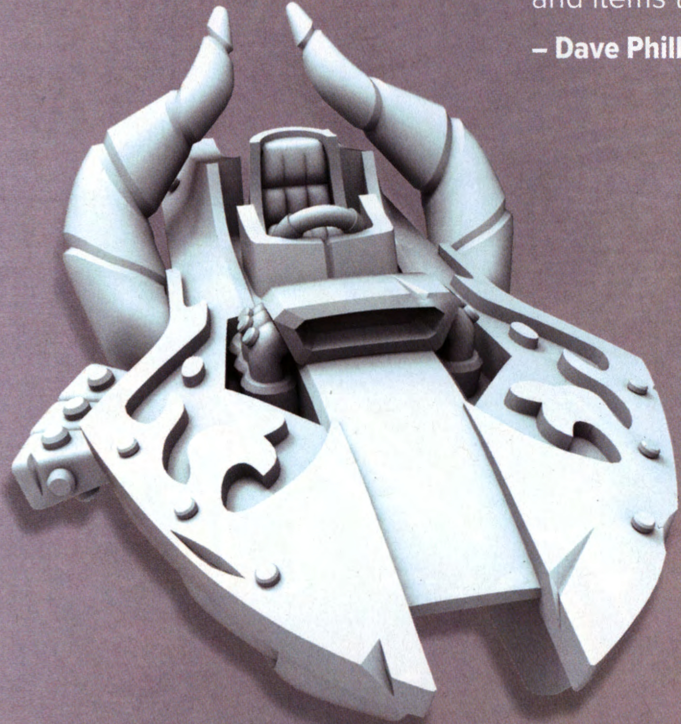


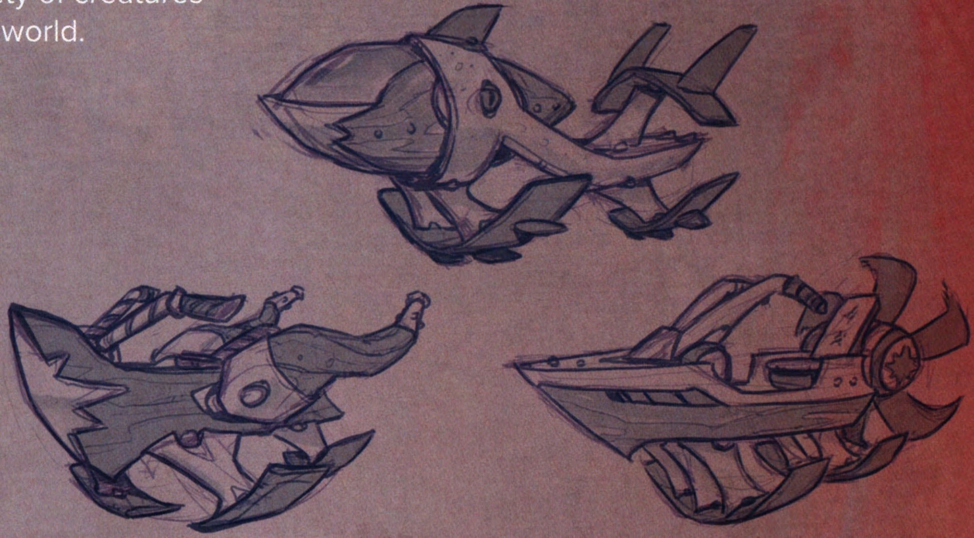


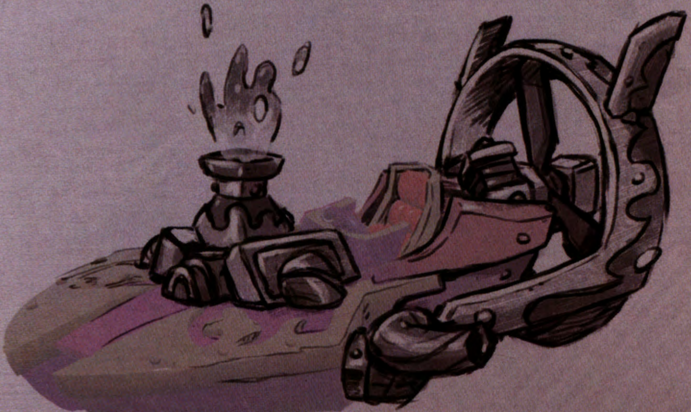


Our concept artists came together to create a rich, organic variety of creatures and items to populate the world.

– Dave Phillips

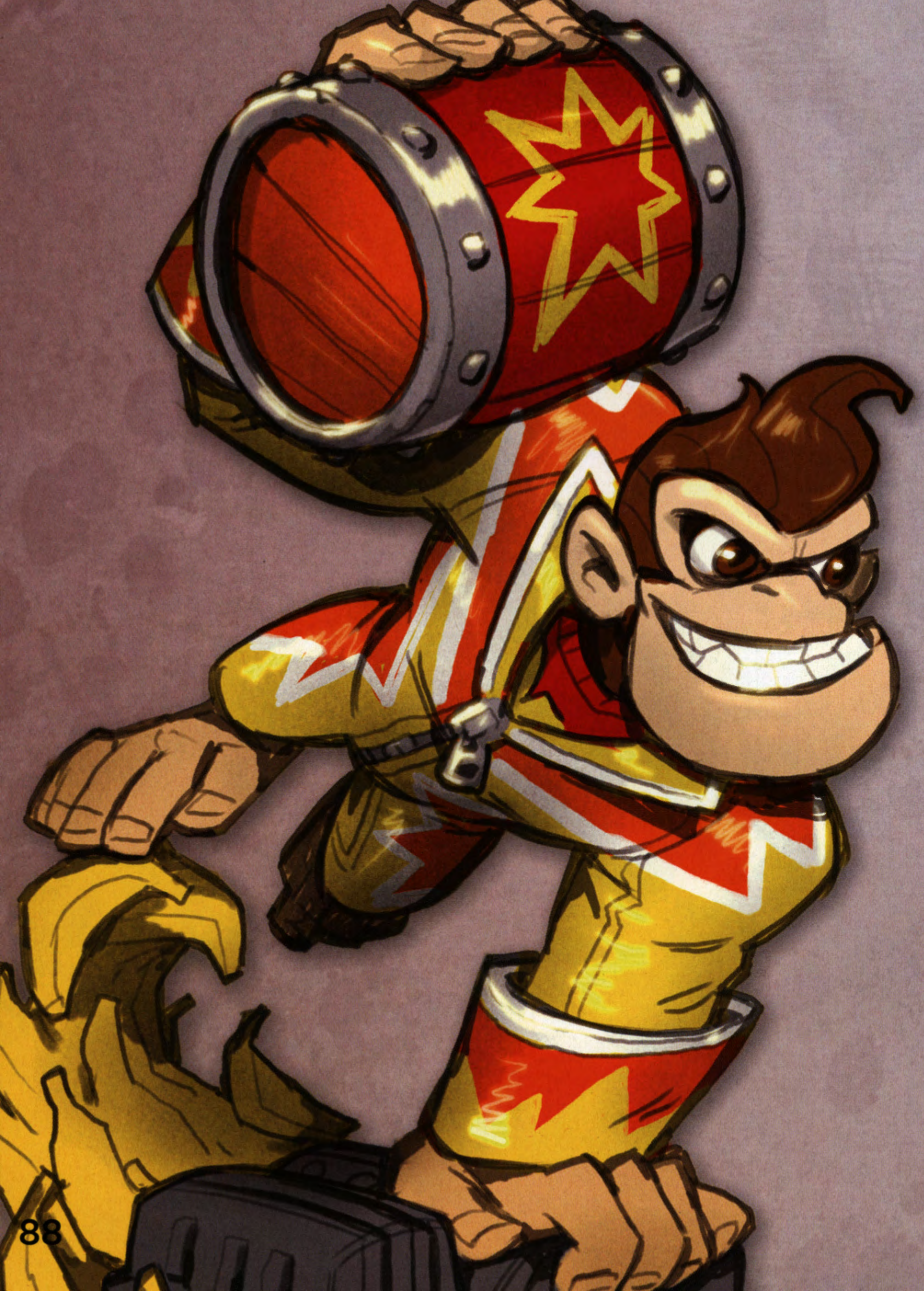


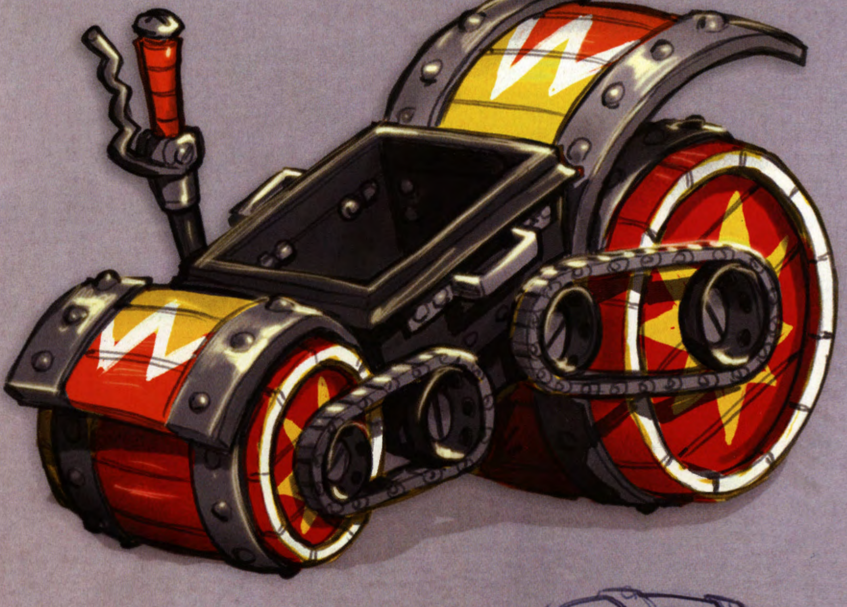


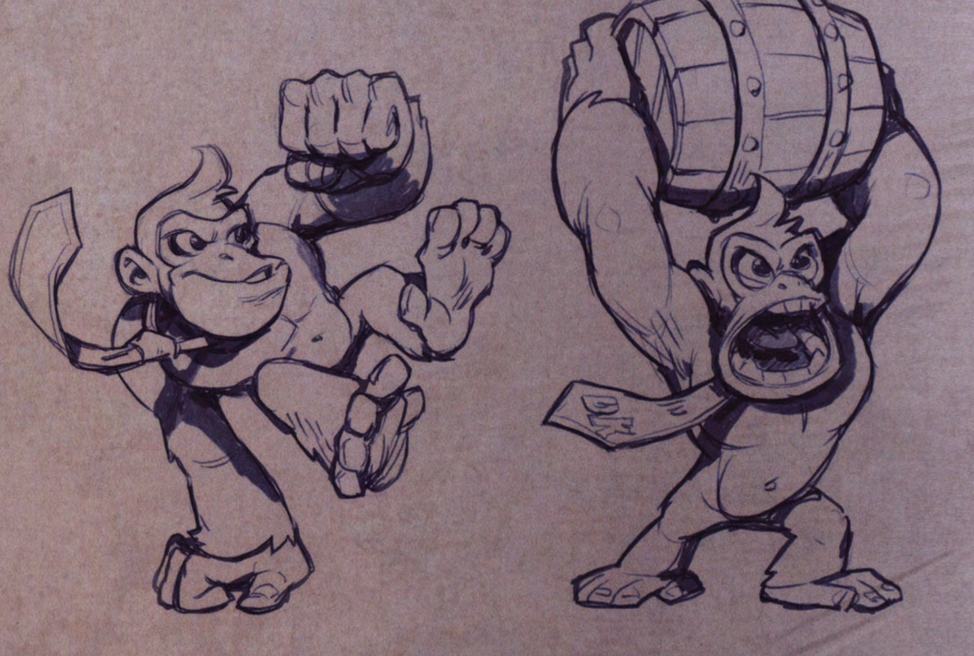


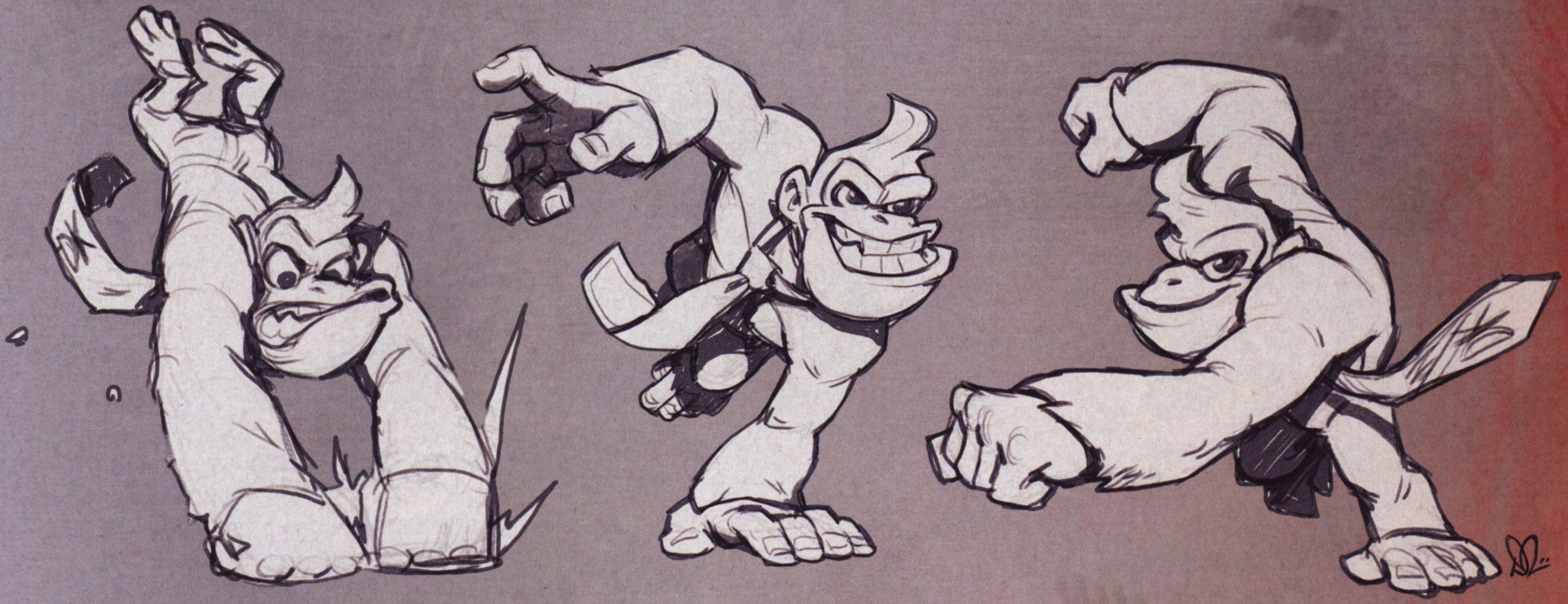
TURBO CHARGED

DONKEY KONG & BARREL BLASTER



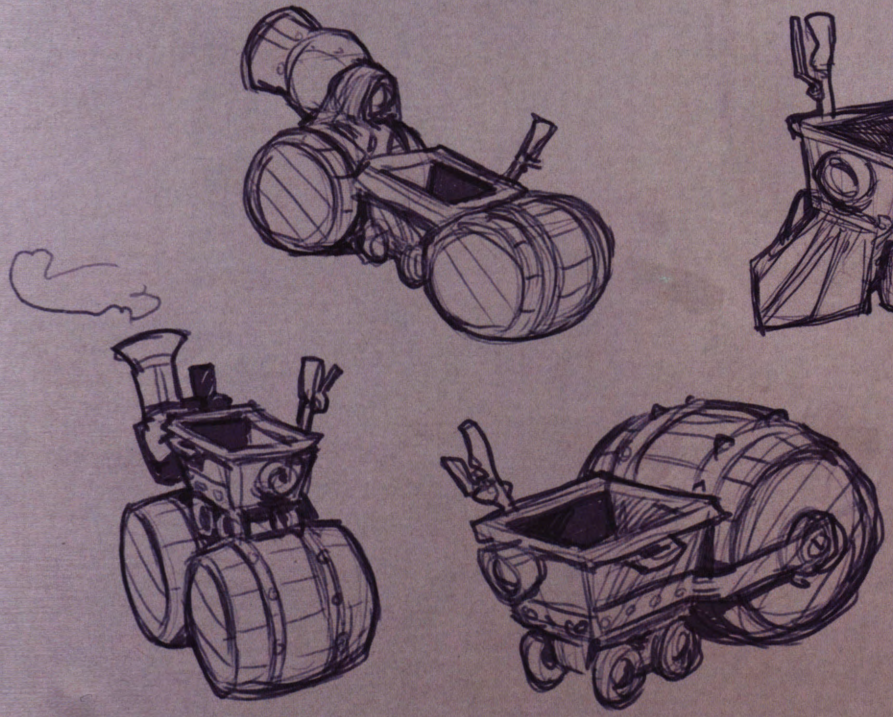


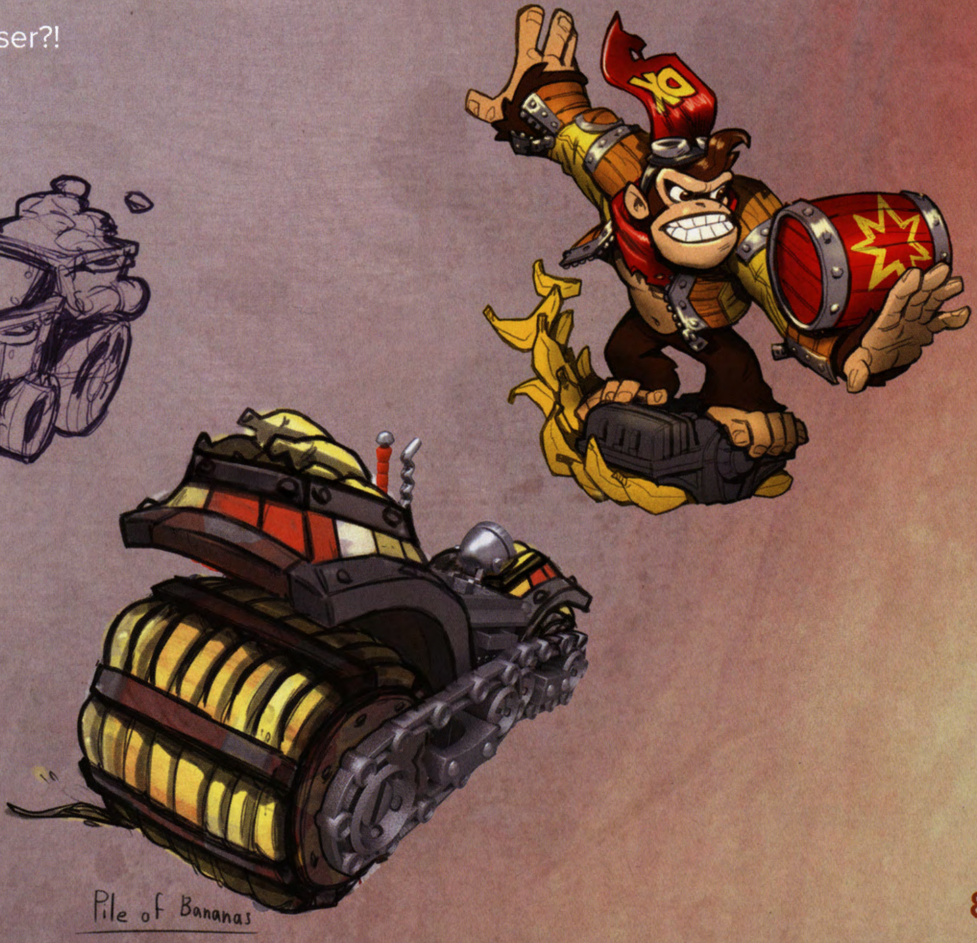


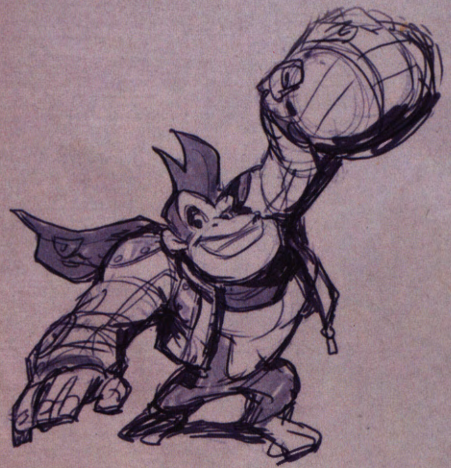


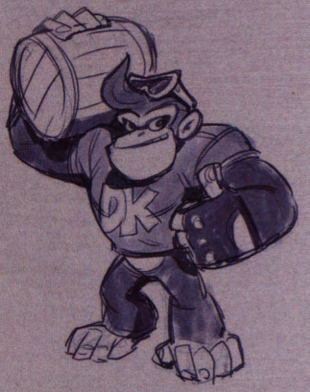
Karthik is certifiably crazy, or is he? Donkey Kong AND Bowser?!

– Nicholas Ruepp



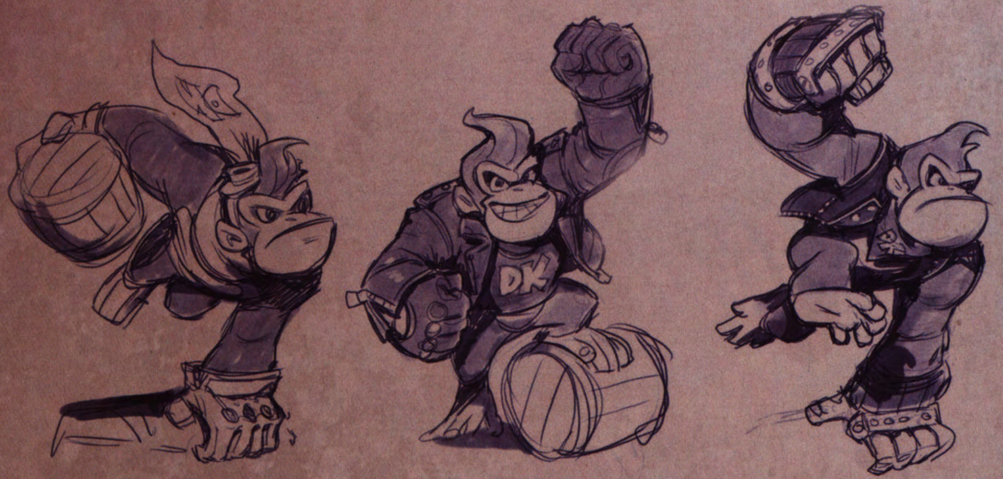

DK
Pile of Bananas

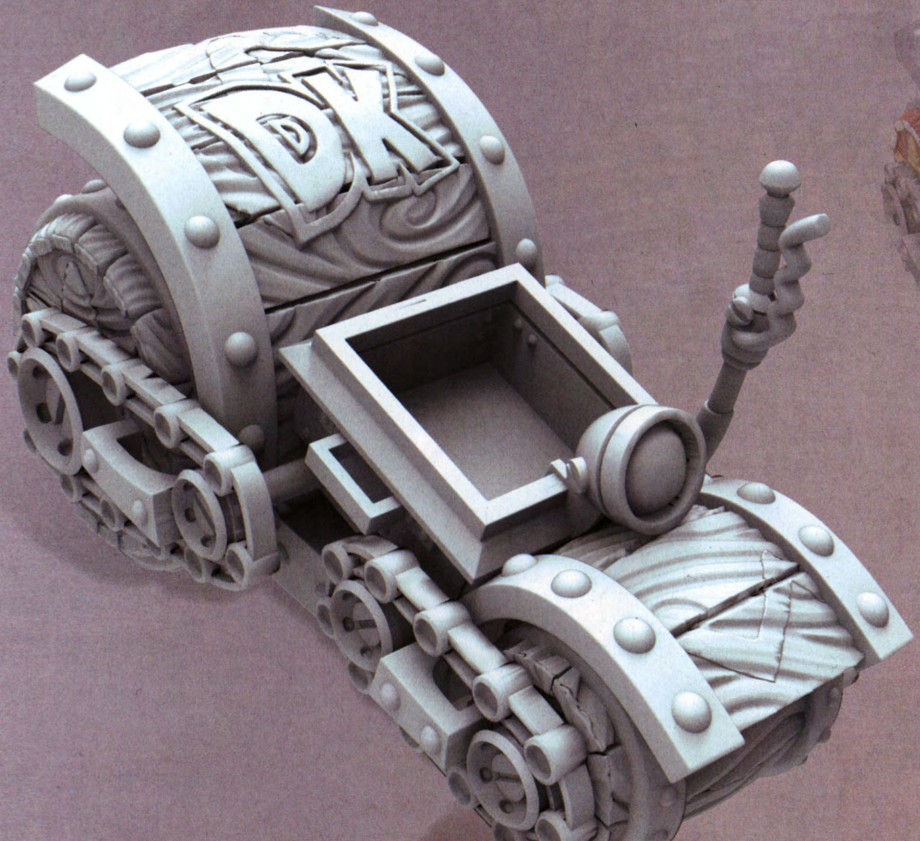


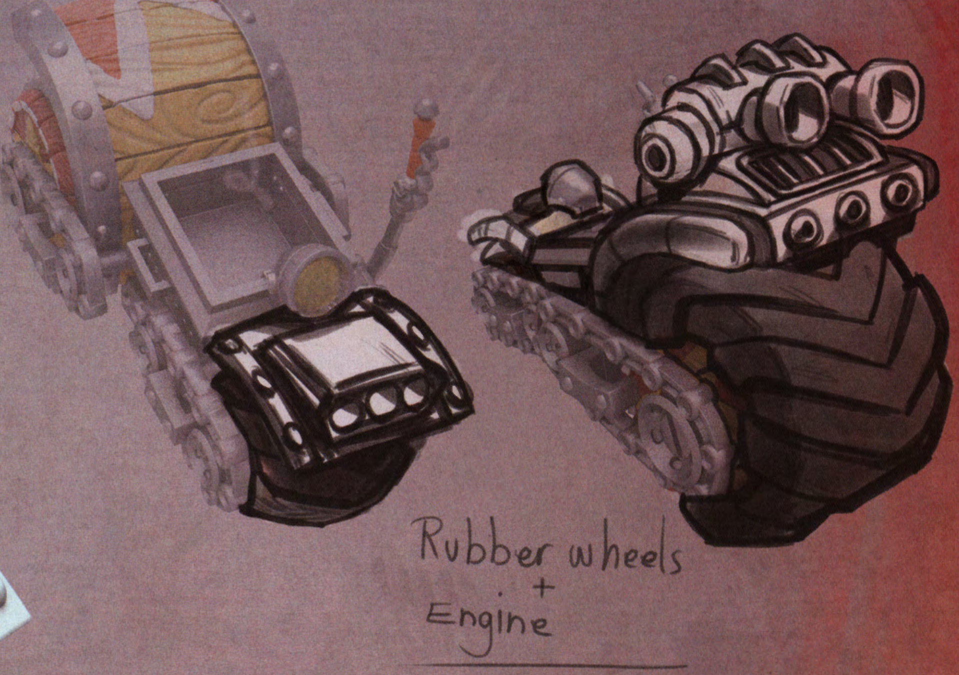


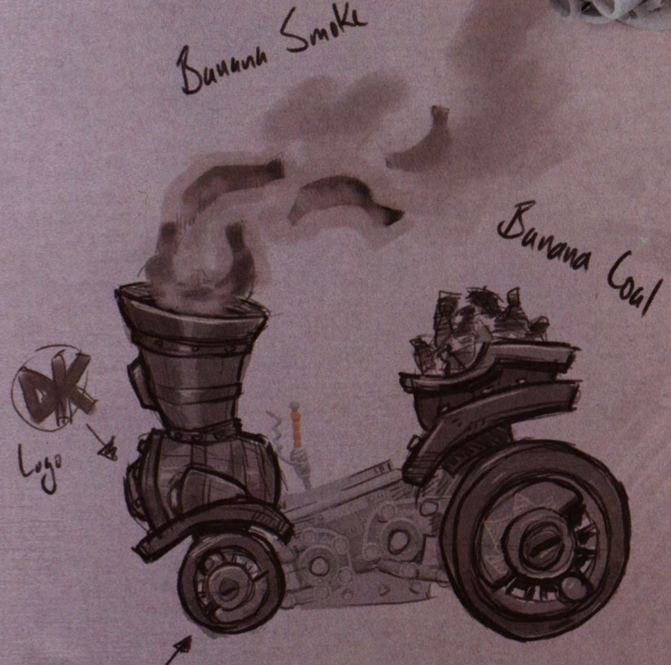
We get to work on a game with Donkey Kong and Bowser? YES.

– Stephen Moss

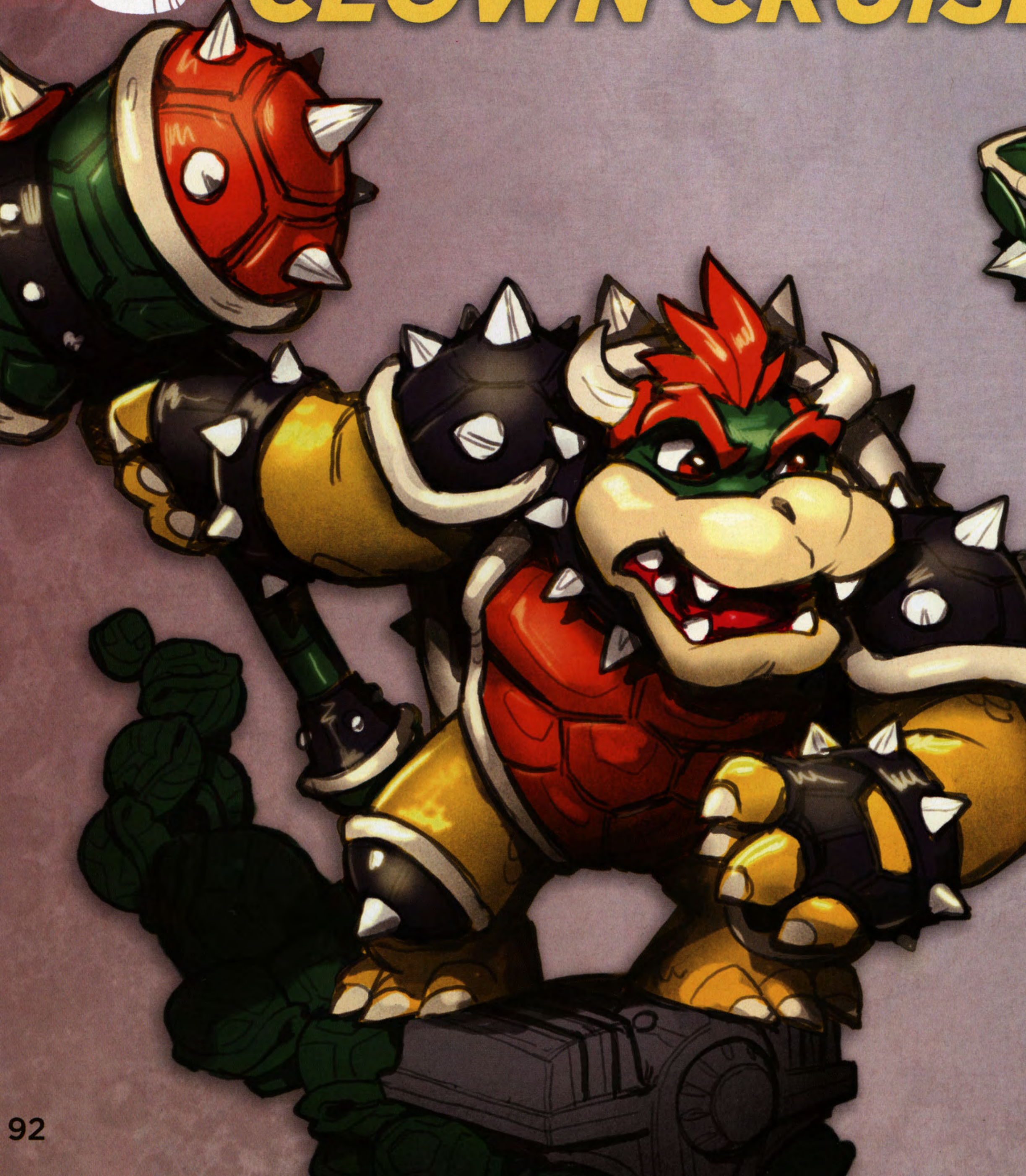


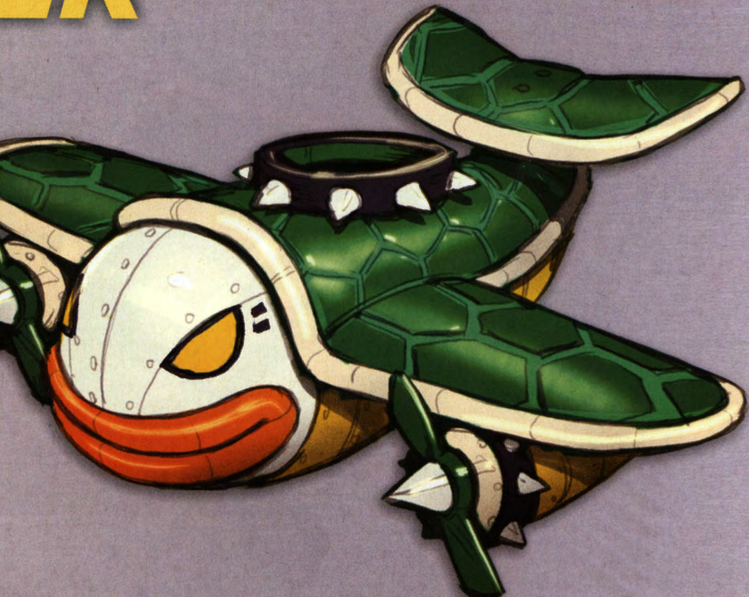


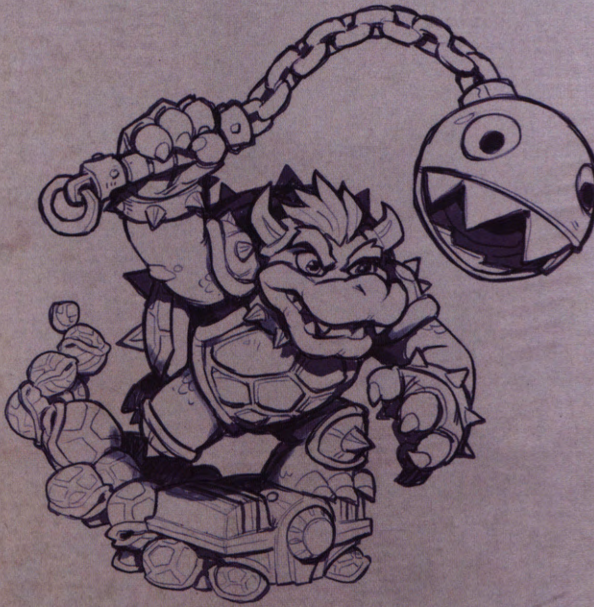

Rubber wheels
+
Engine

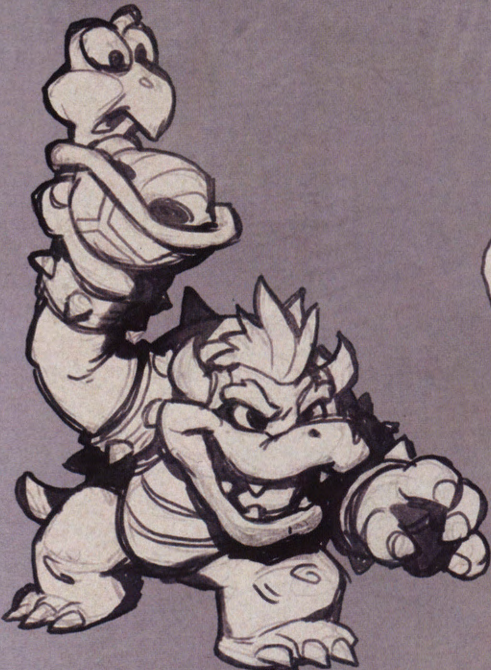
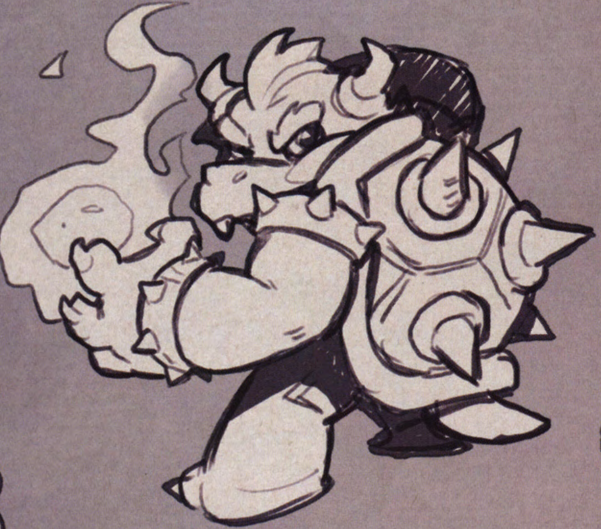
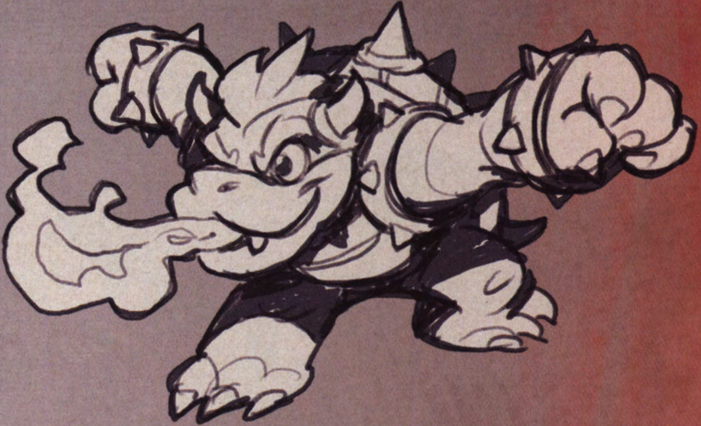

Banana Smoke
Banana Coal
Logo
Train Wheels

HAMMER SLAM
BOWSER & CLOWN CRUISER



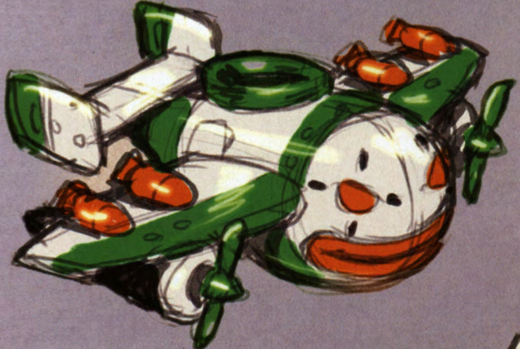
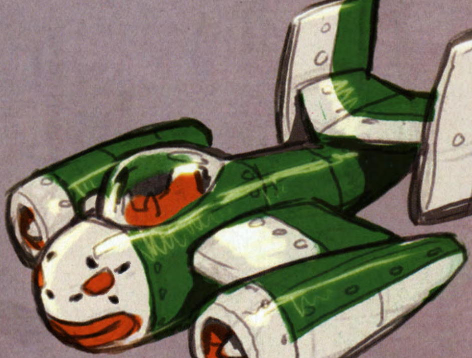
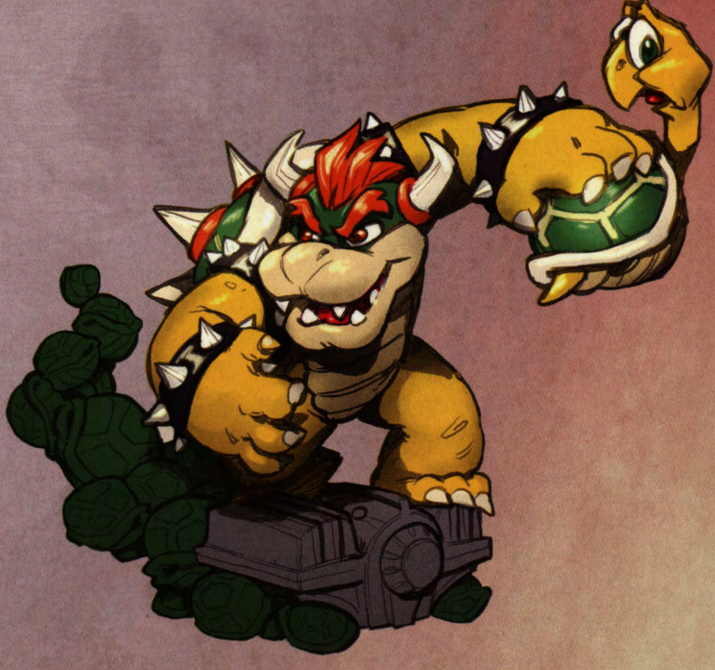
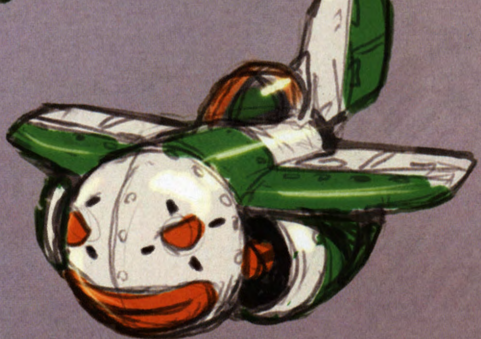
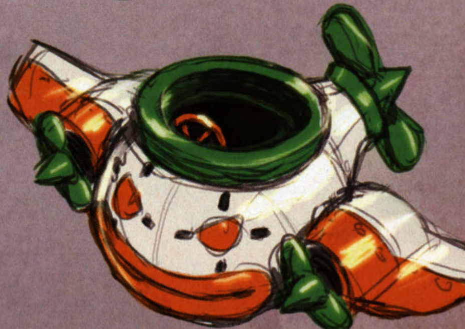


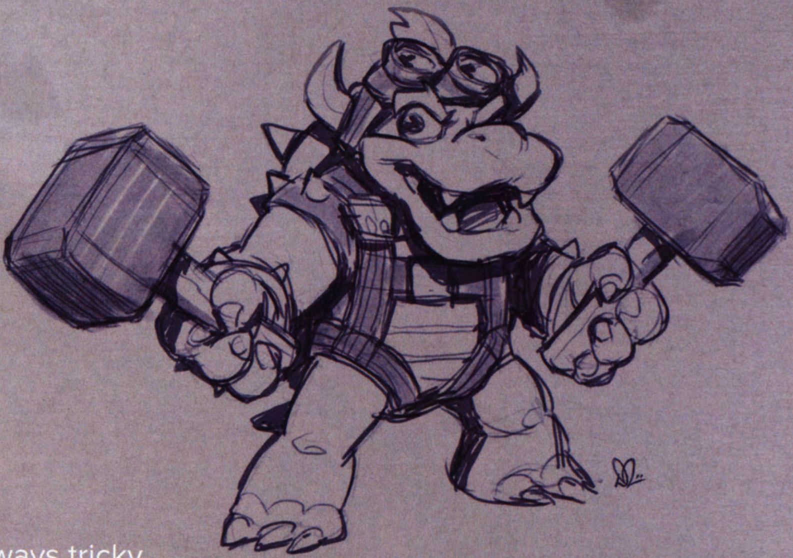


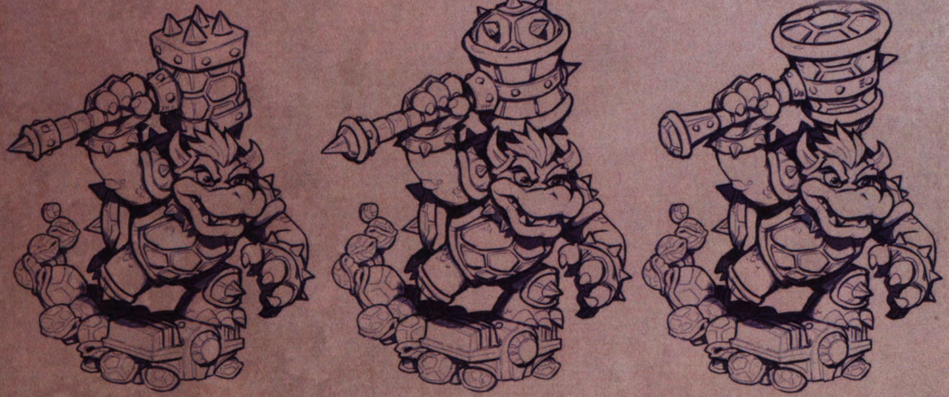
I've never seen so many excited adults as when we heard the news that we'd get to work on two video game icons.

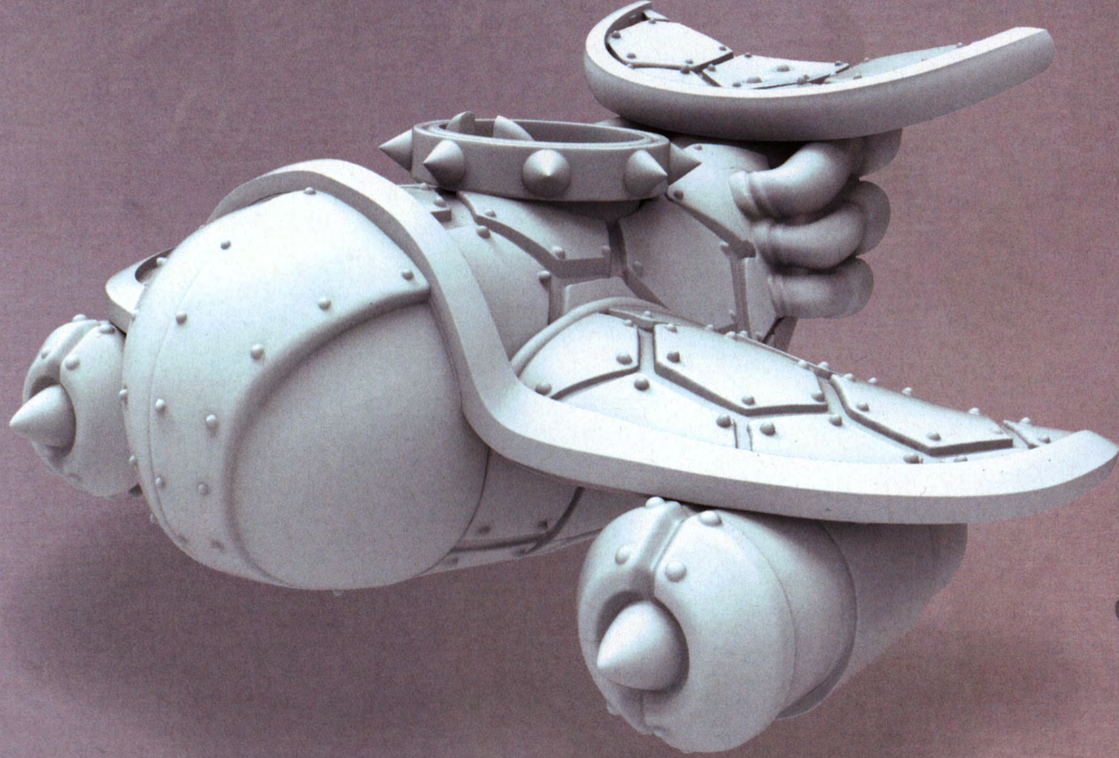
– Romy Cayetano

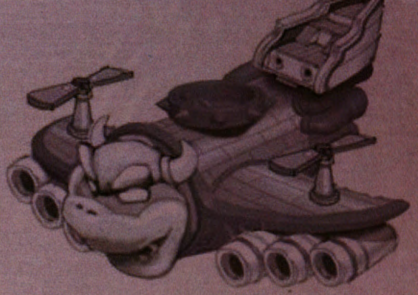






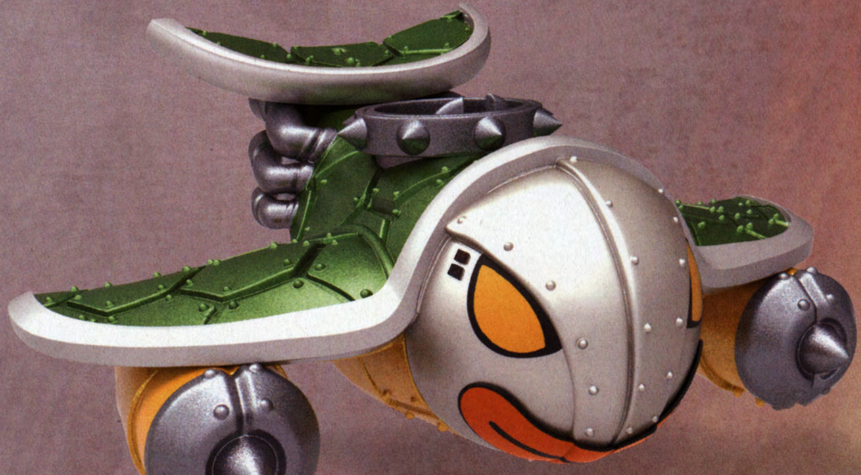


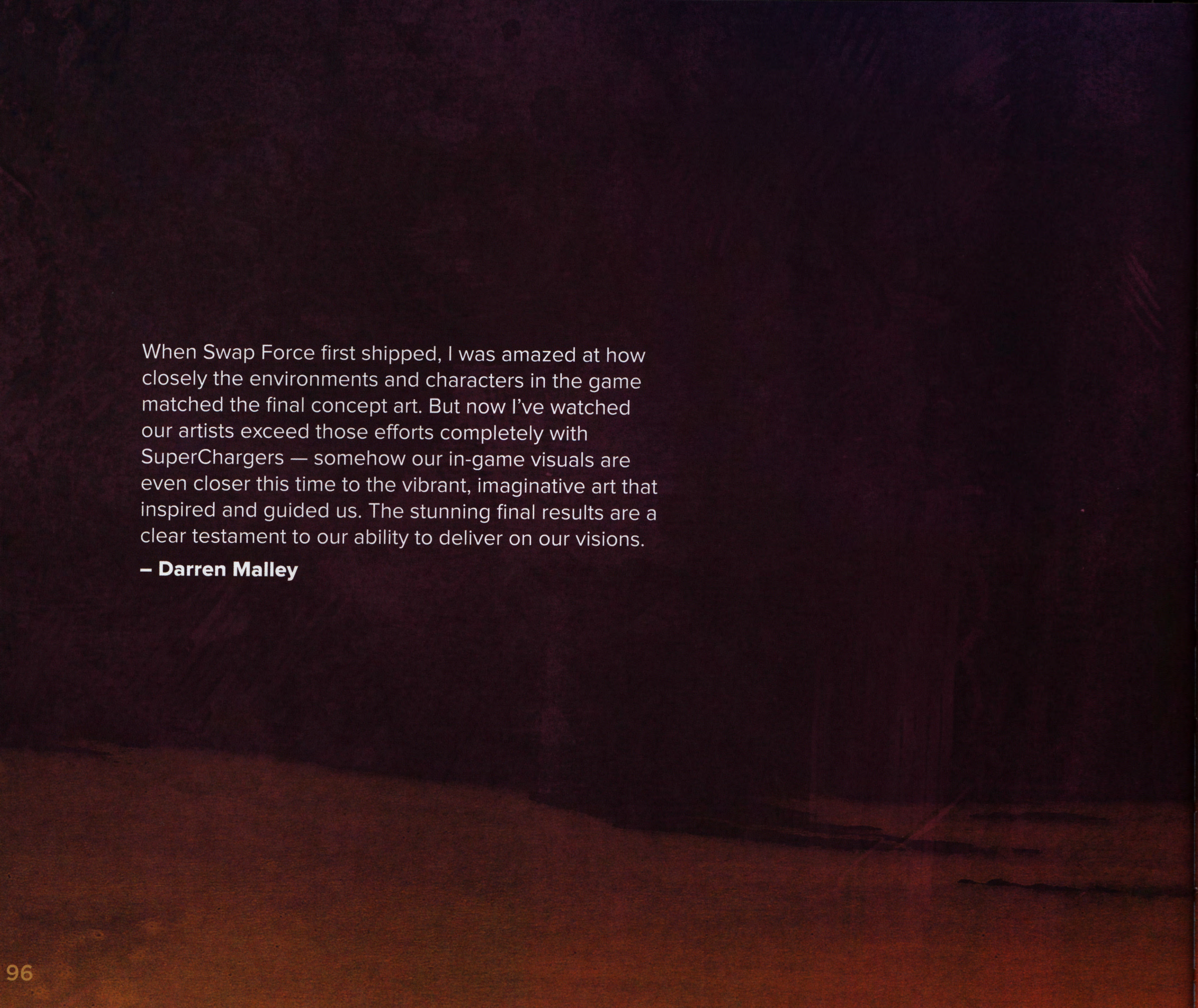
> Crossing universes is always tricky business, but when you find that sweet spot where they feel just as natural in your world as any other... that's true magic!
>
> **– Bill Castagna**









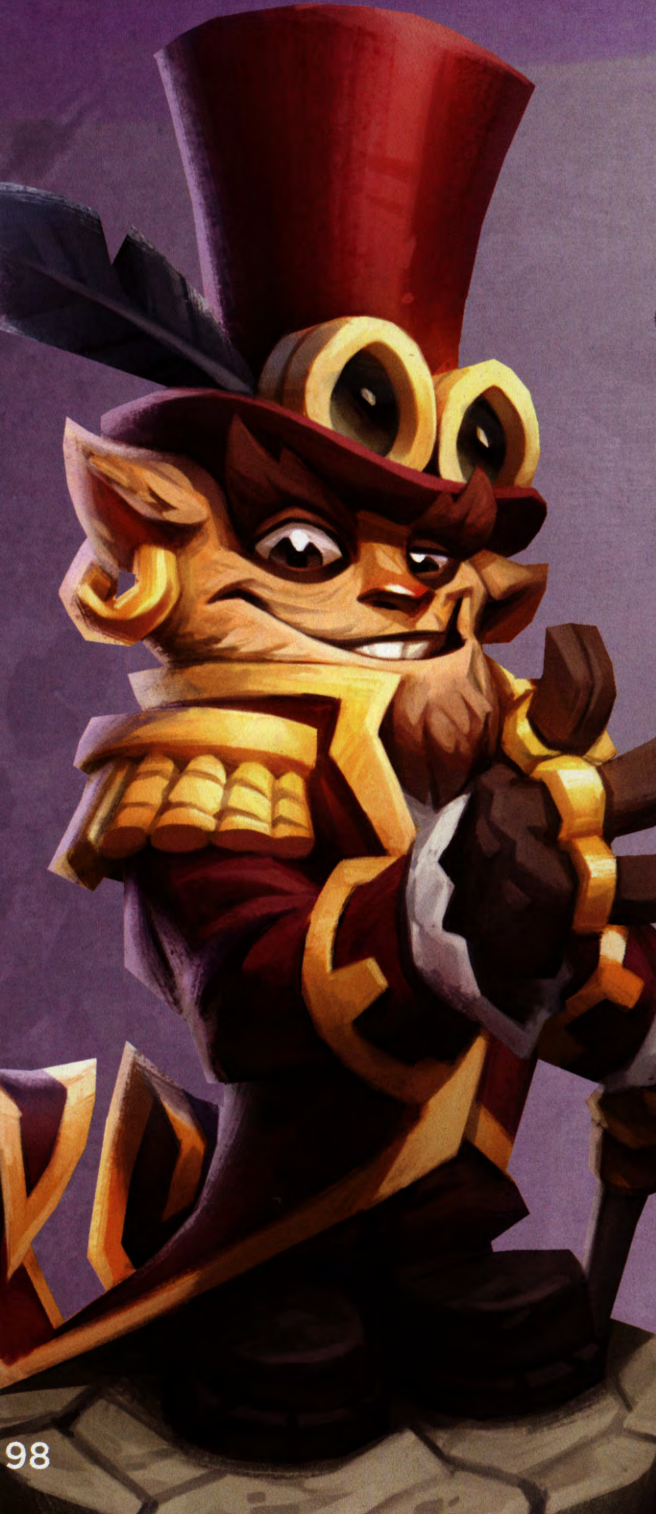


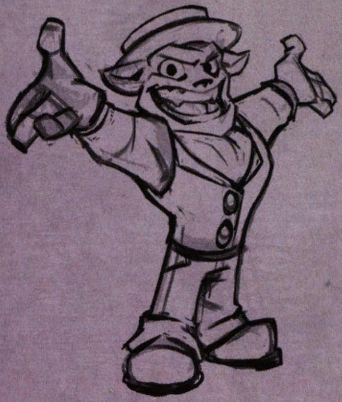
When Swap Force first shipped, I was amazed at how closely the environments and characters in the game matched the final concept art. But now I've watched our artists exceed those efforts completely with SuperChargers — somehow our in-game visuals are even closer this time to the vibrant, imaginative art that inspired and guided us. The stunning final results are a clear testament to our ability to deliver on our visions.

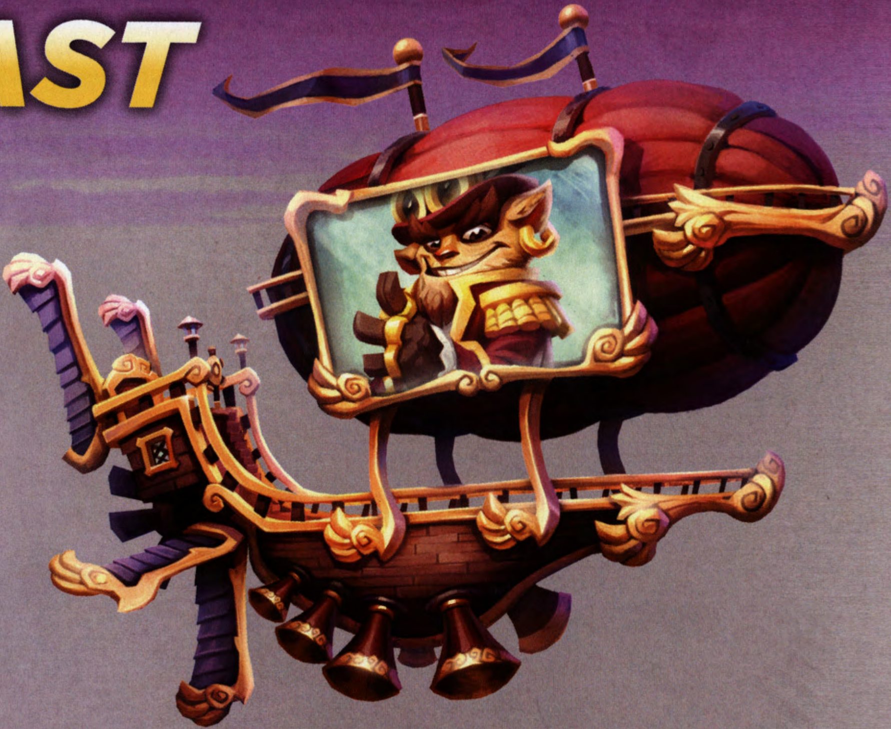
– Darren Malley

FRIENDS & FOES

SUPPORTING CAST

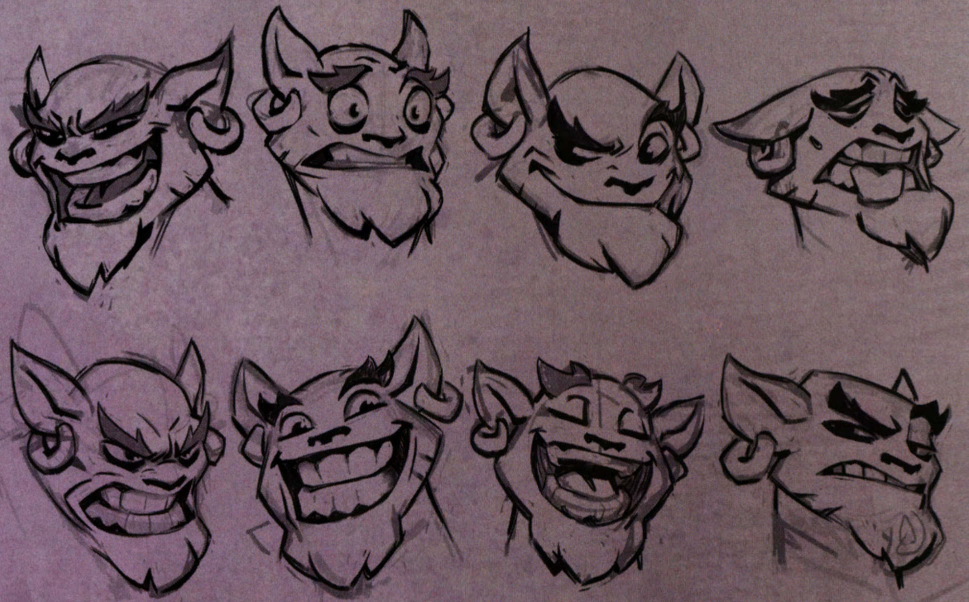


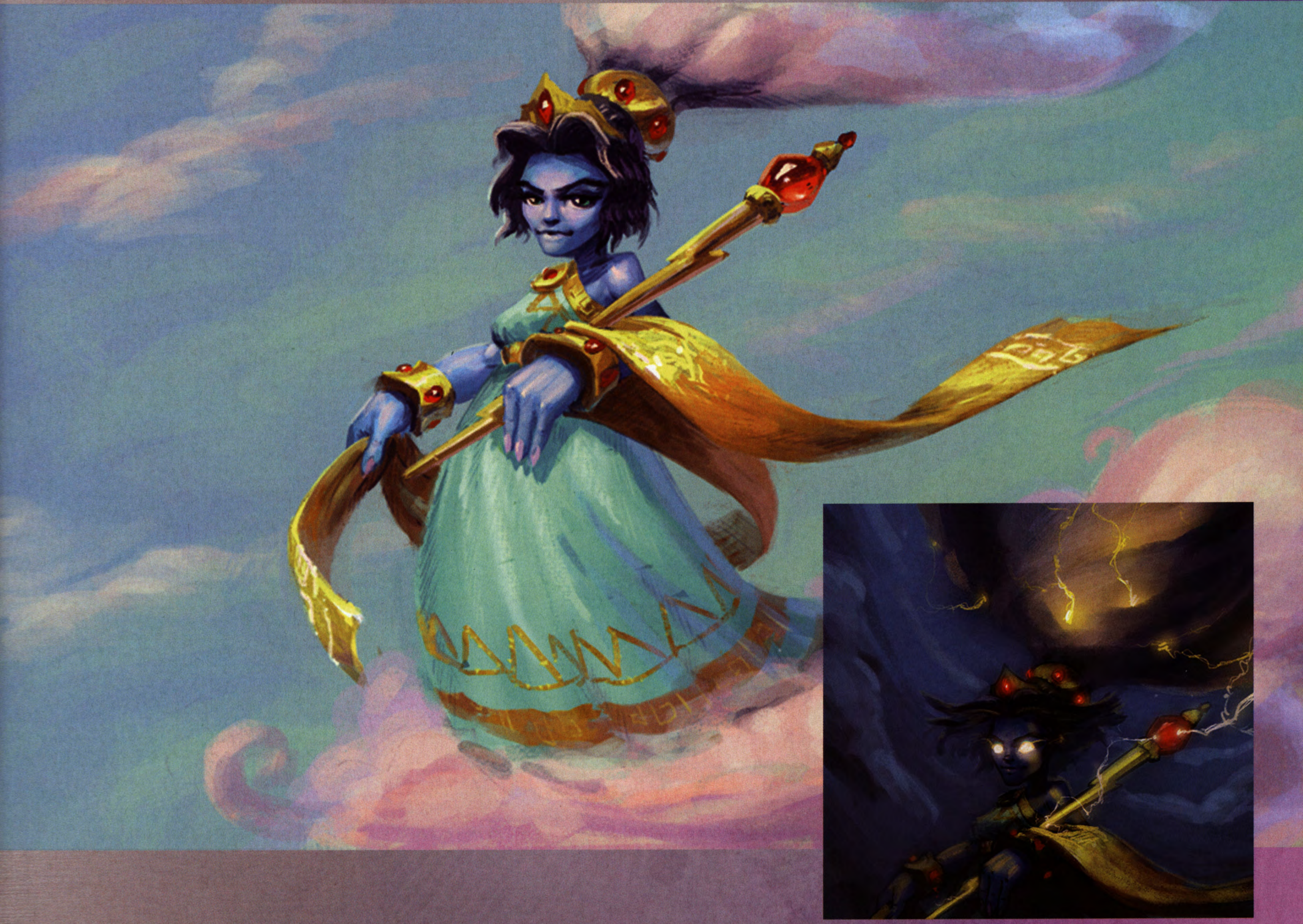


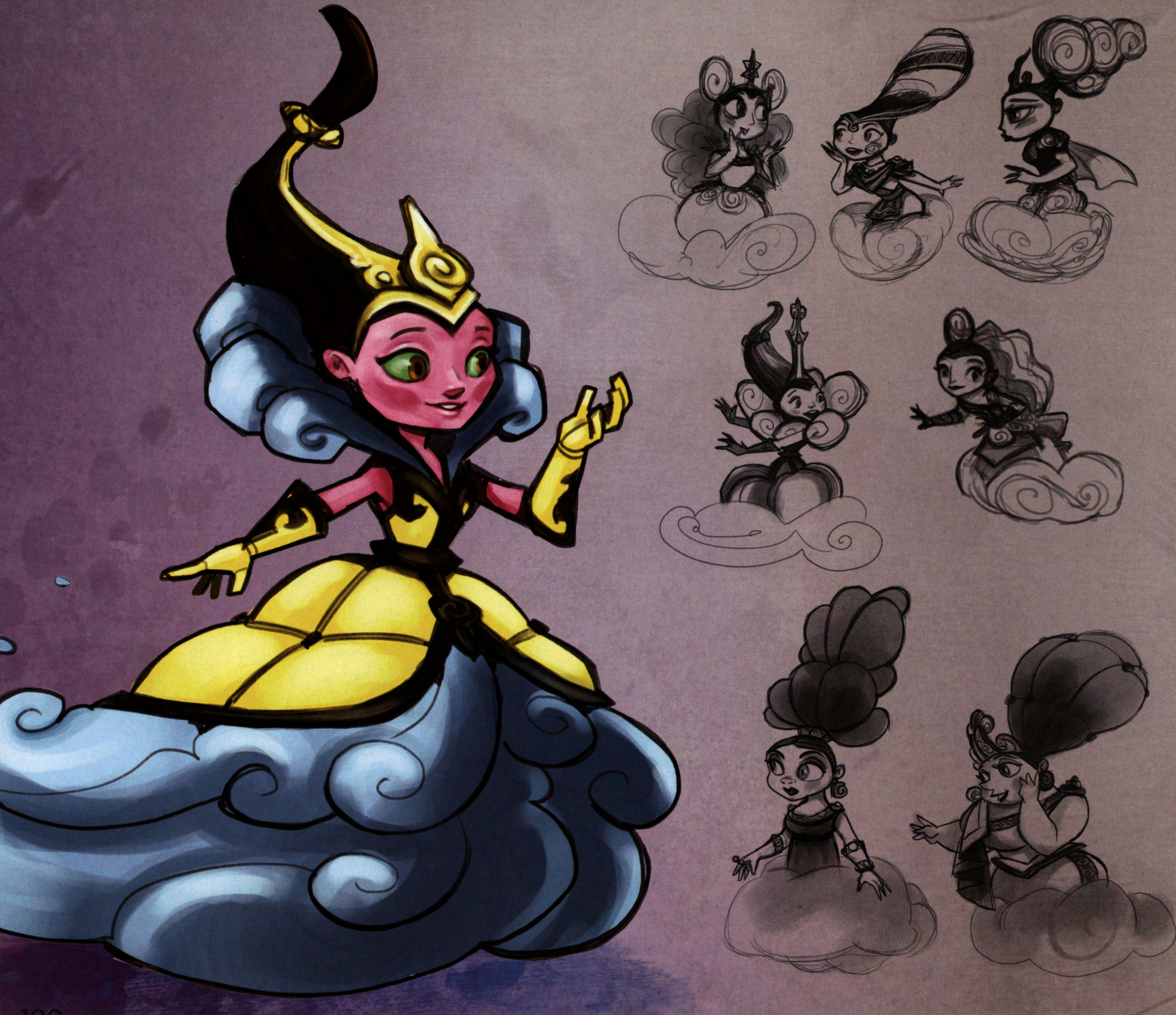


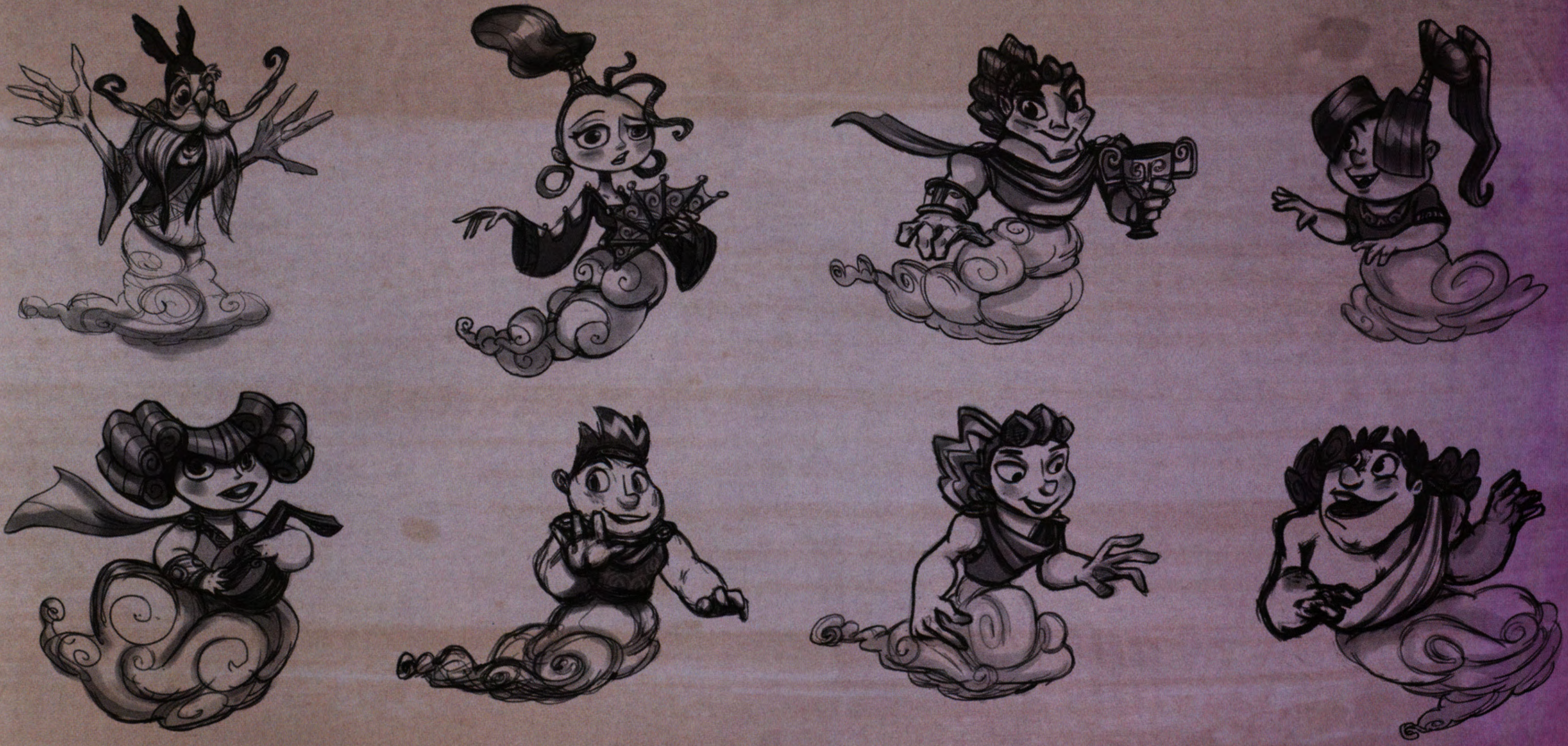
It might amaze some people how many iterations of a simple NPC are created for a one-time appearance in a level.

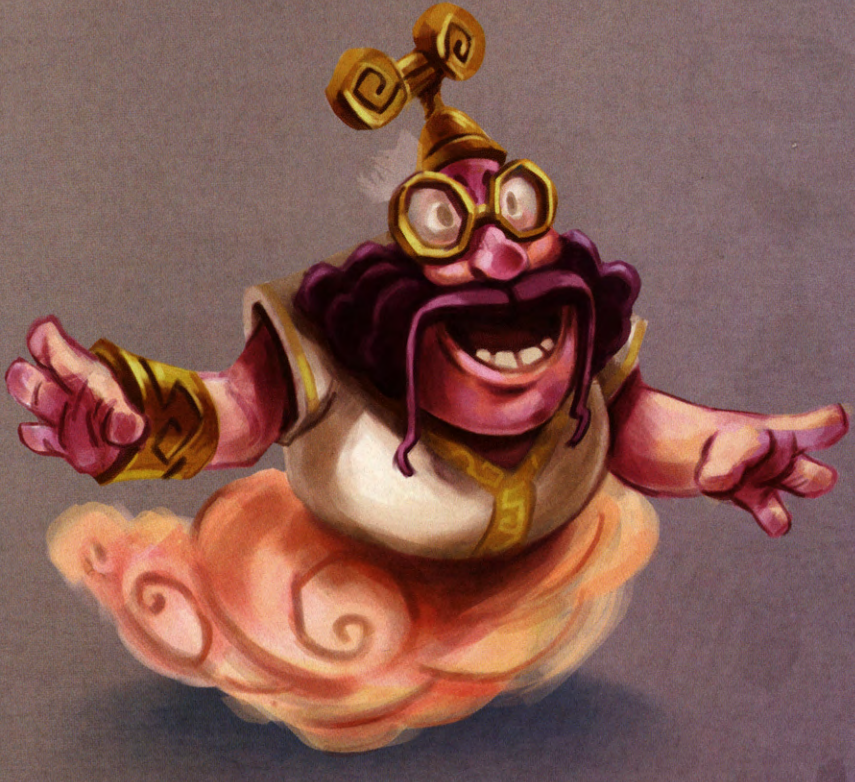
– Scott Moore

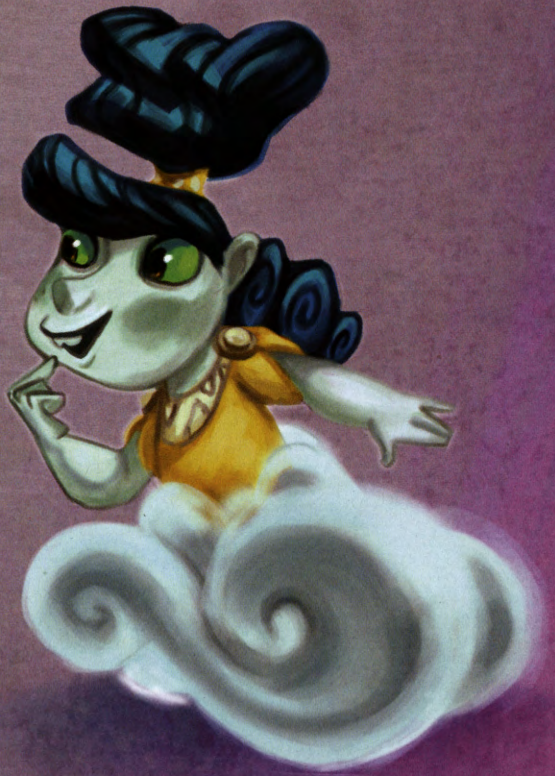


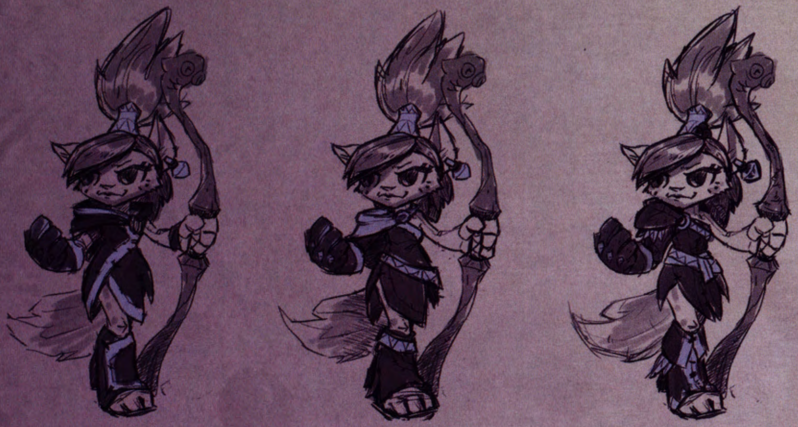


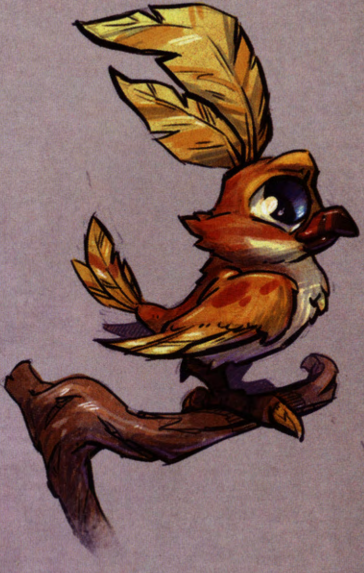


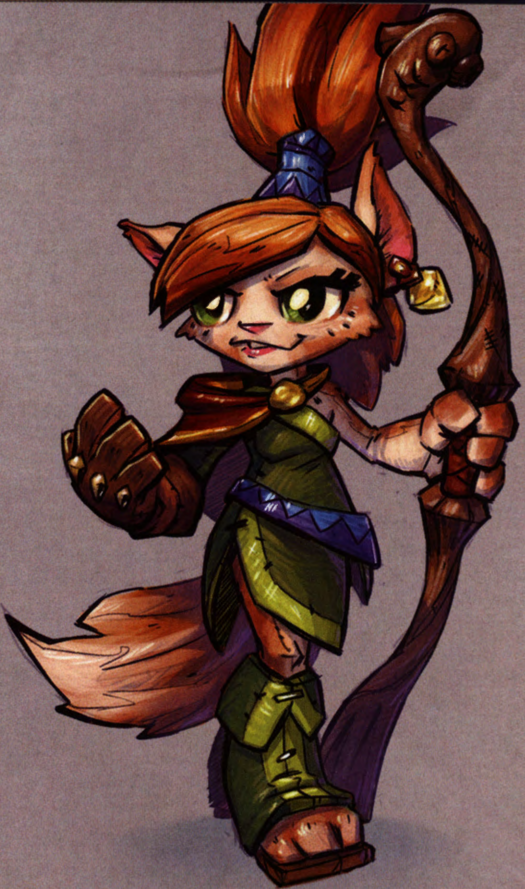


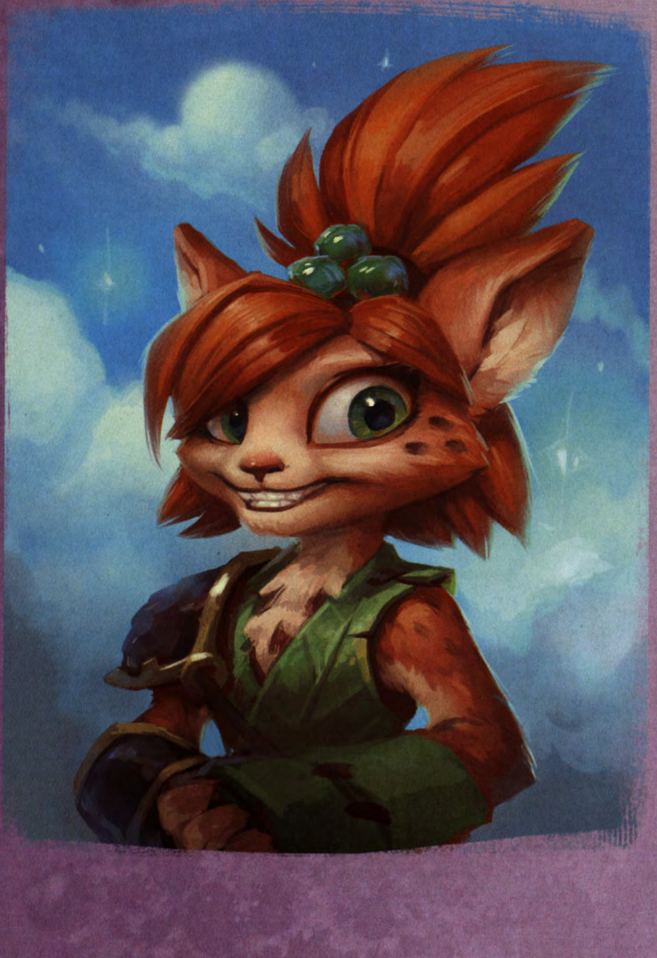


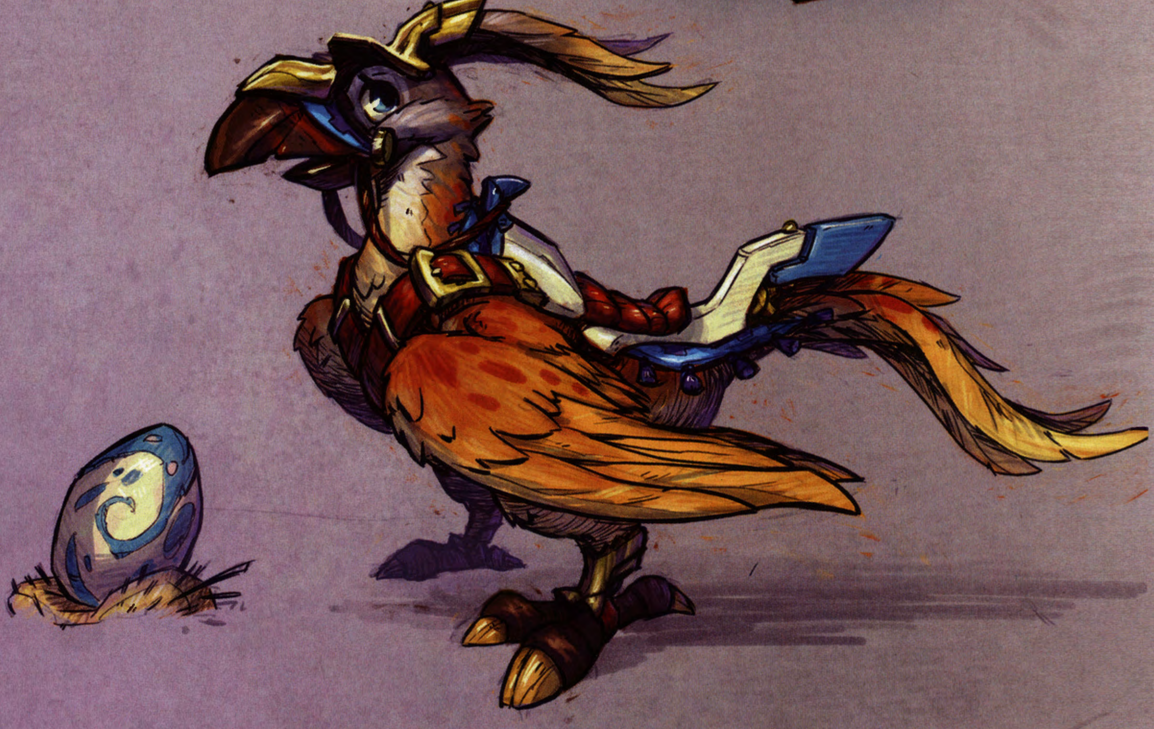


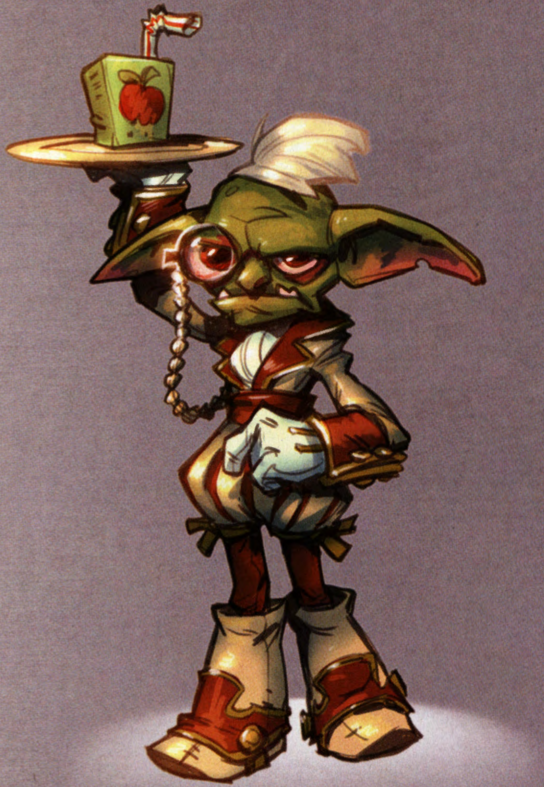


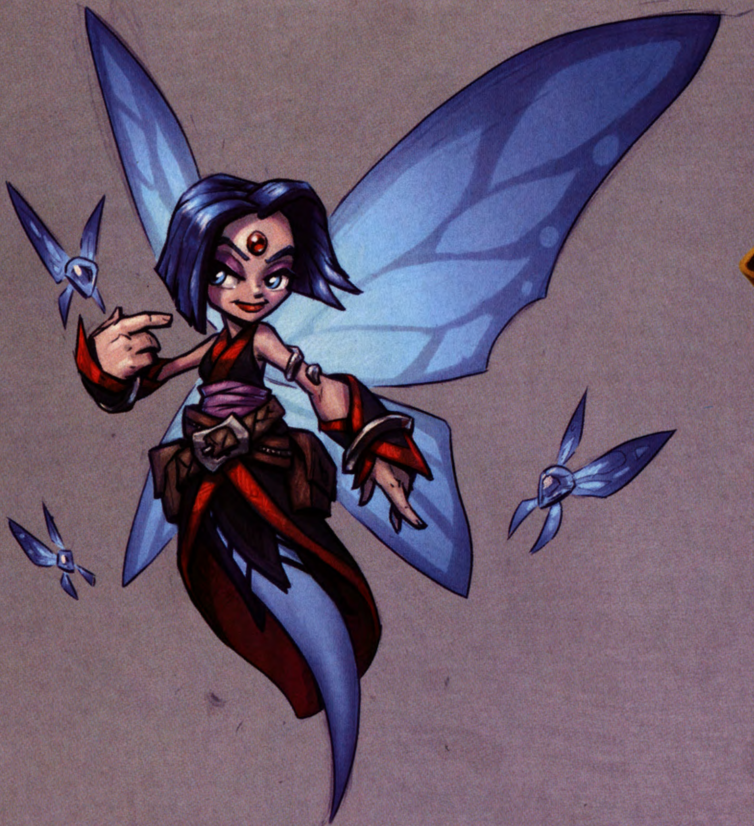


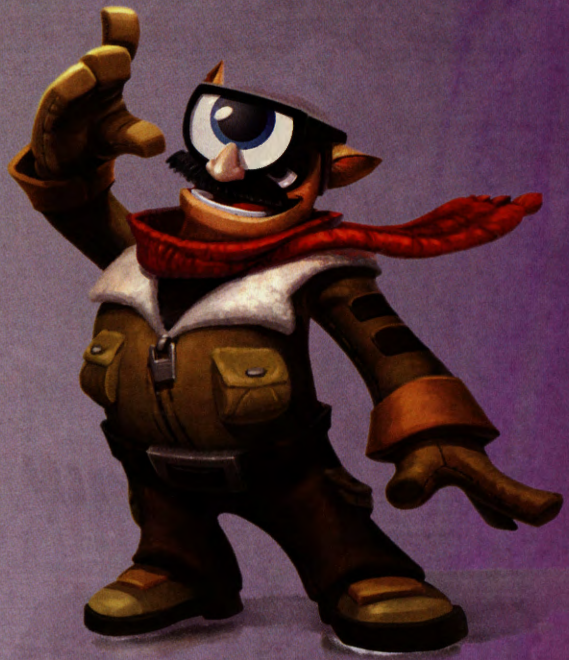


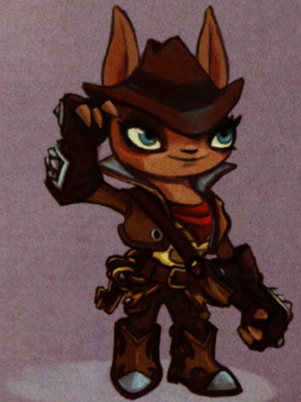


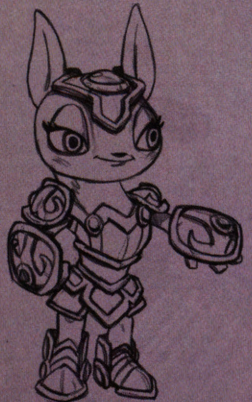


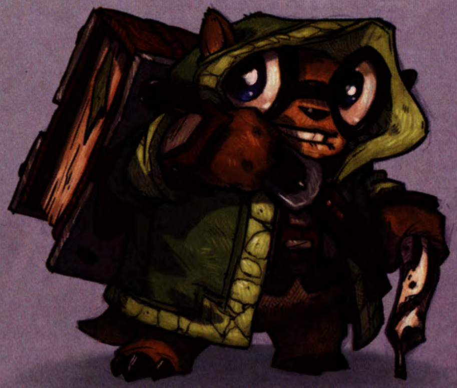


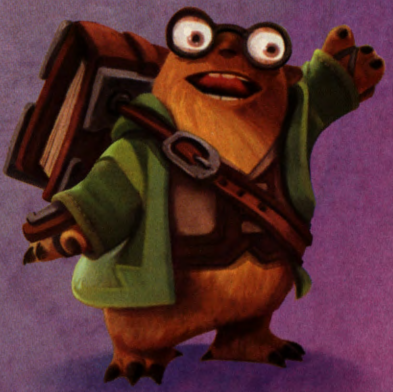


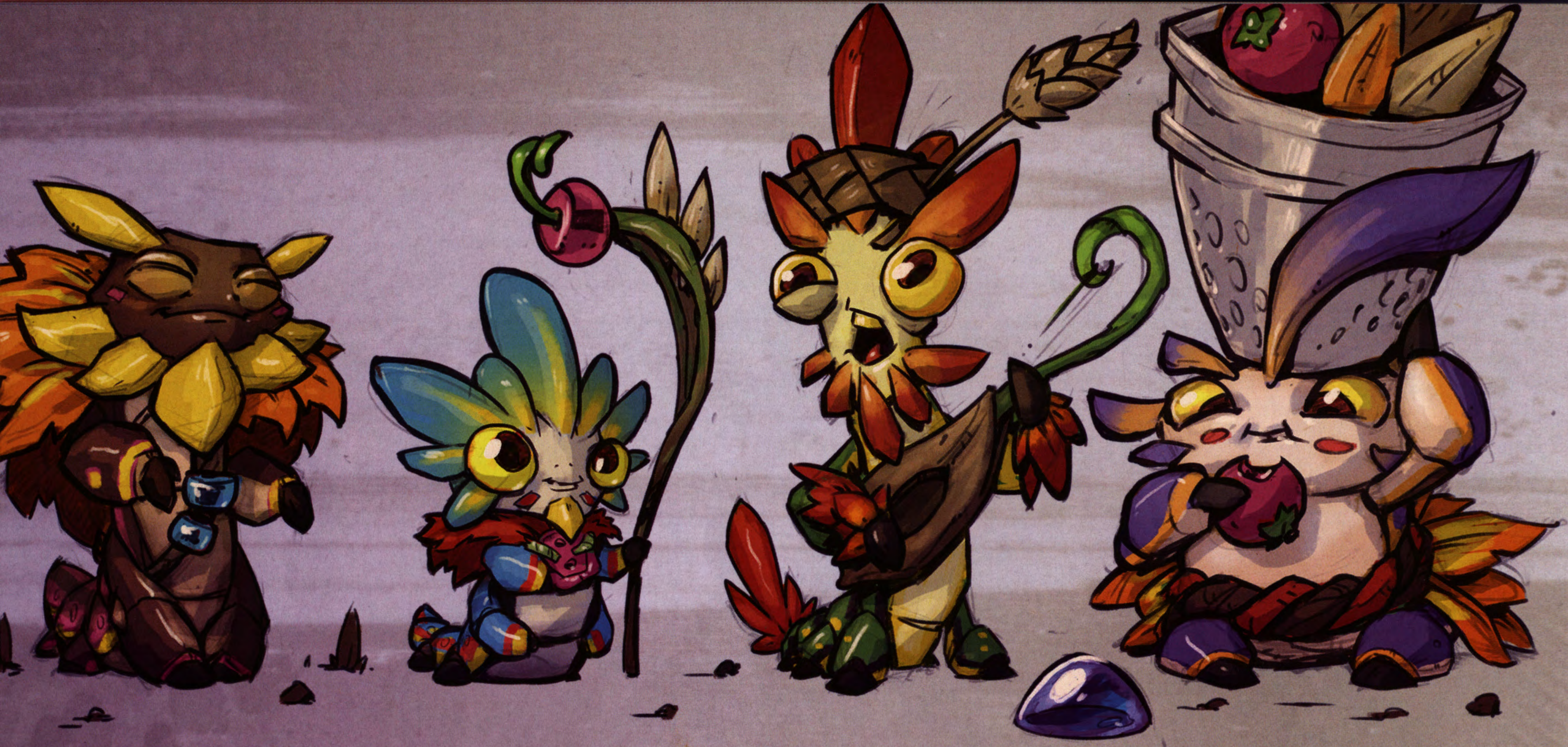




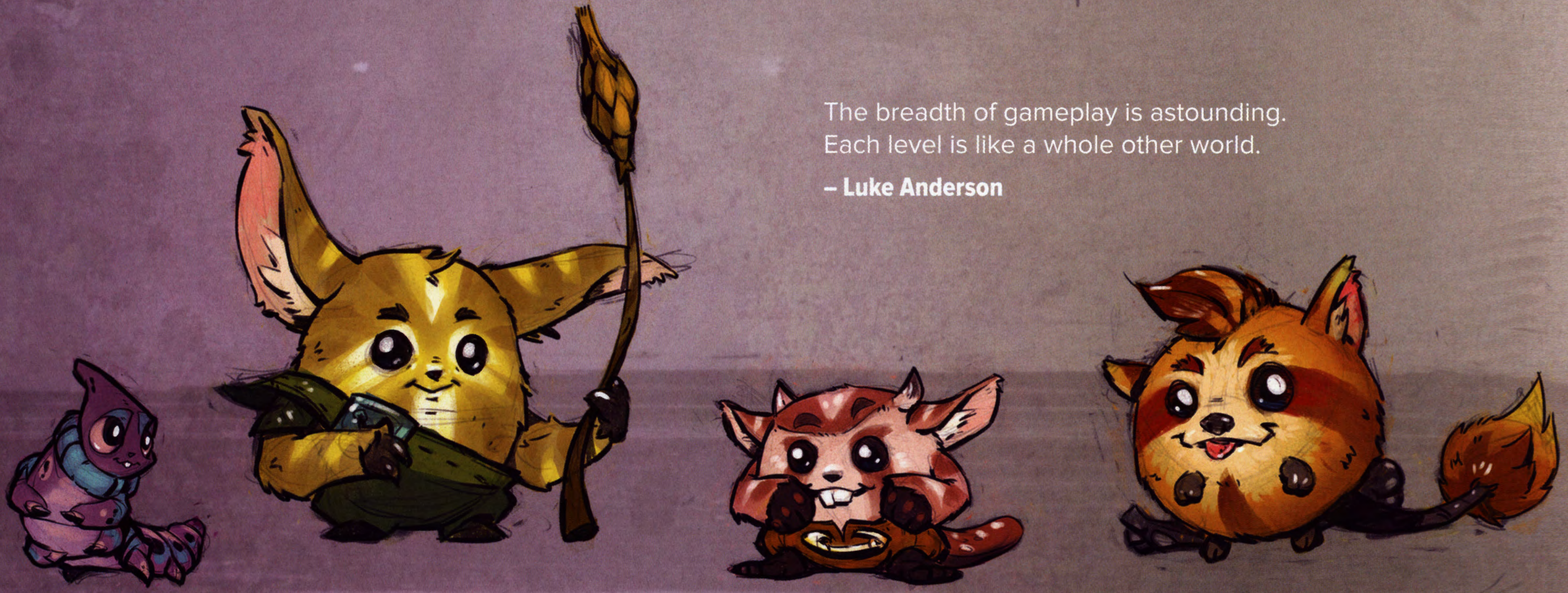


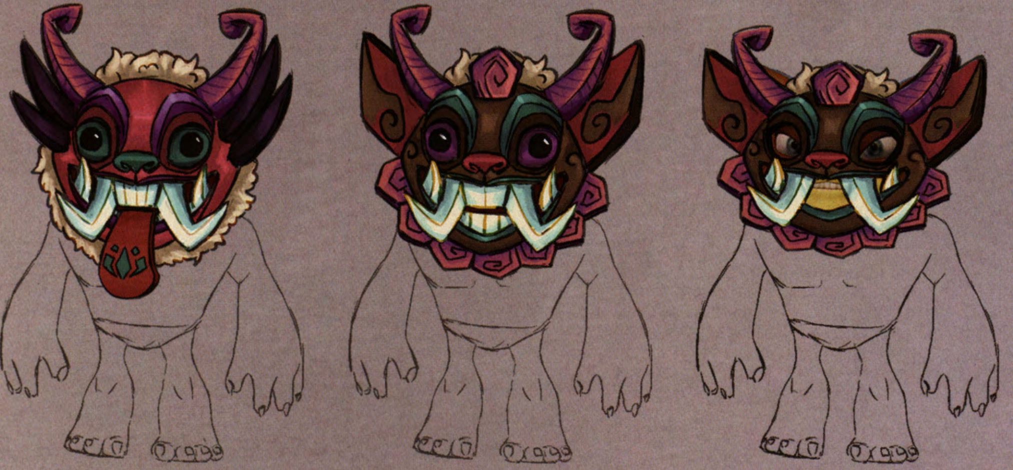


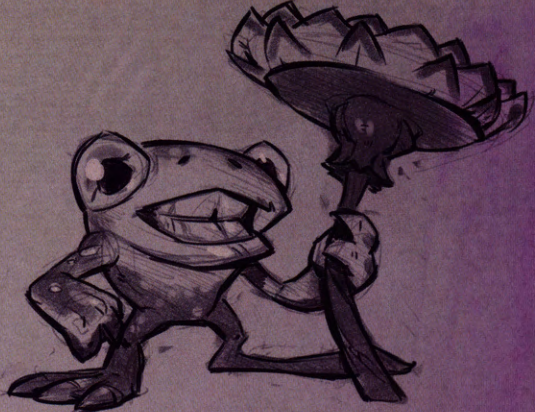


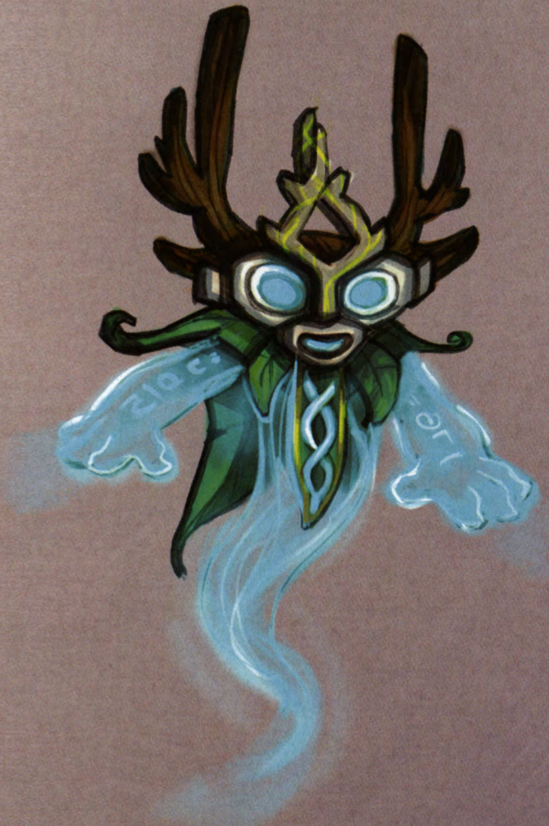


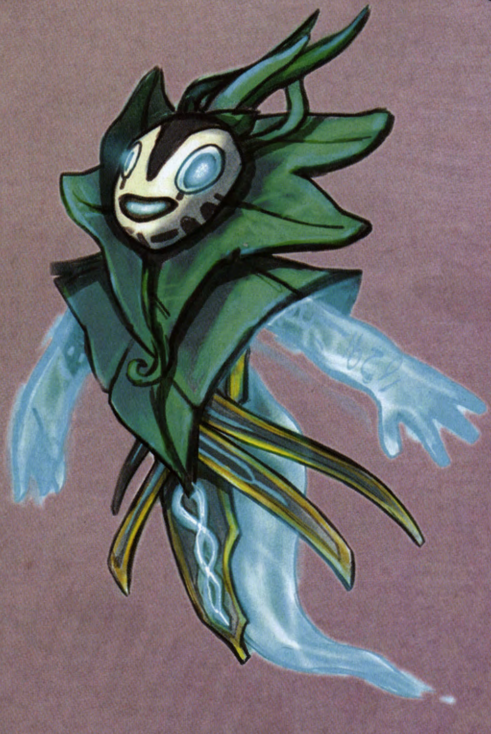
> The breadth of gameplay is astounding. Each level is like a whole other world.
>
> **– Luke Anderson**

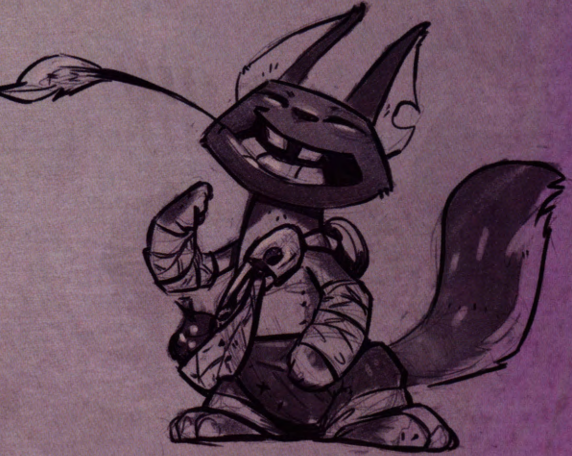


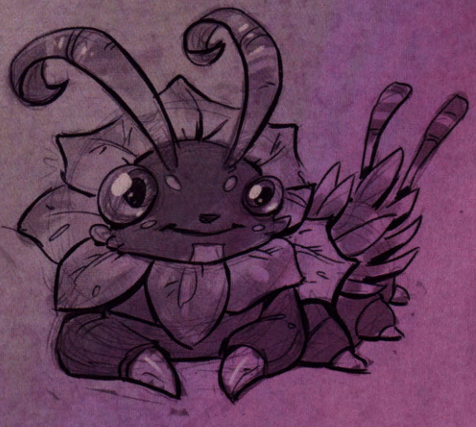




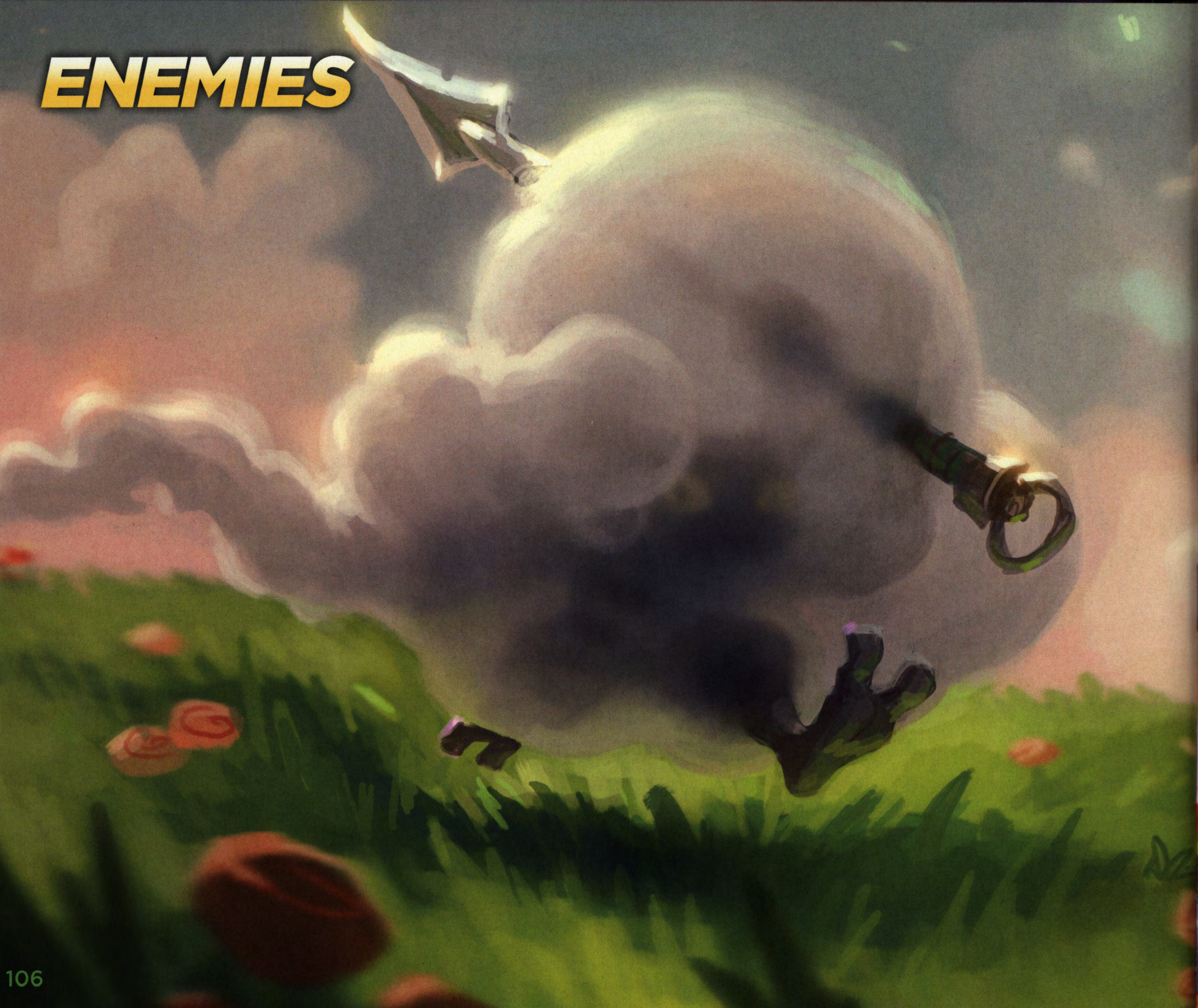


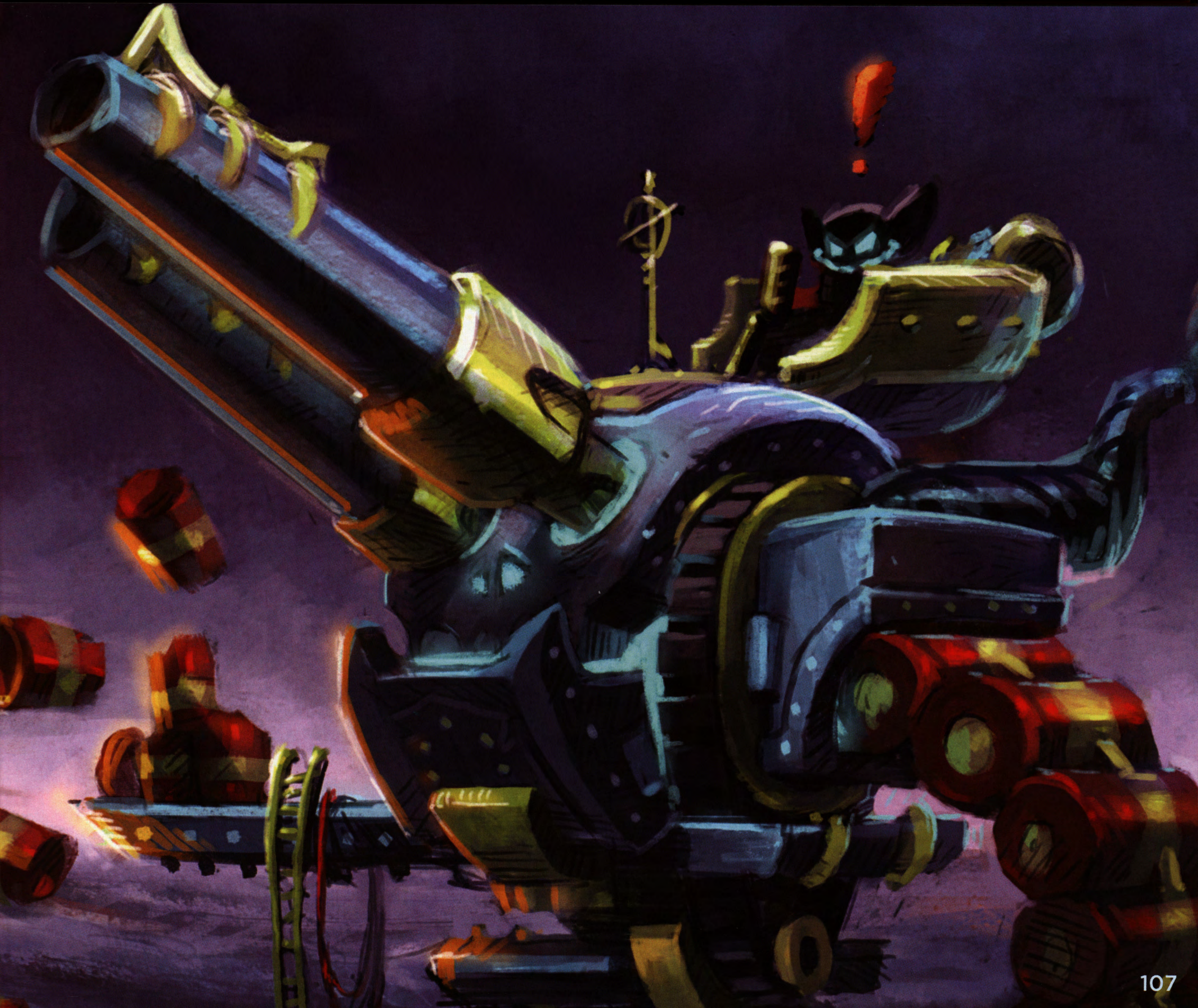


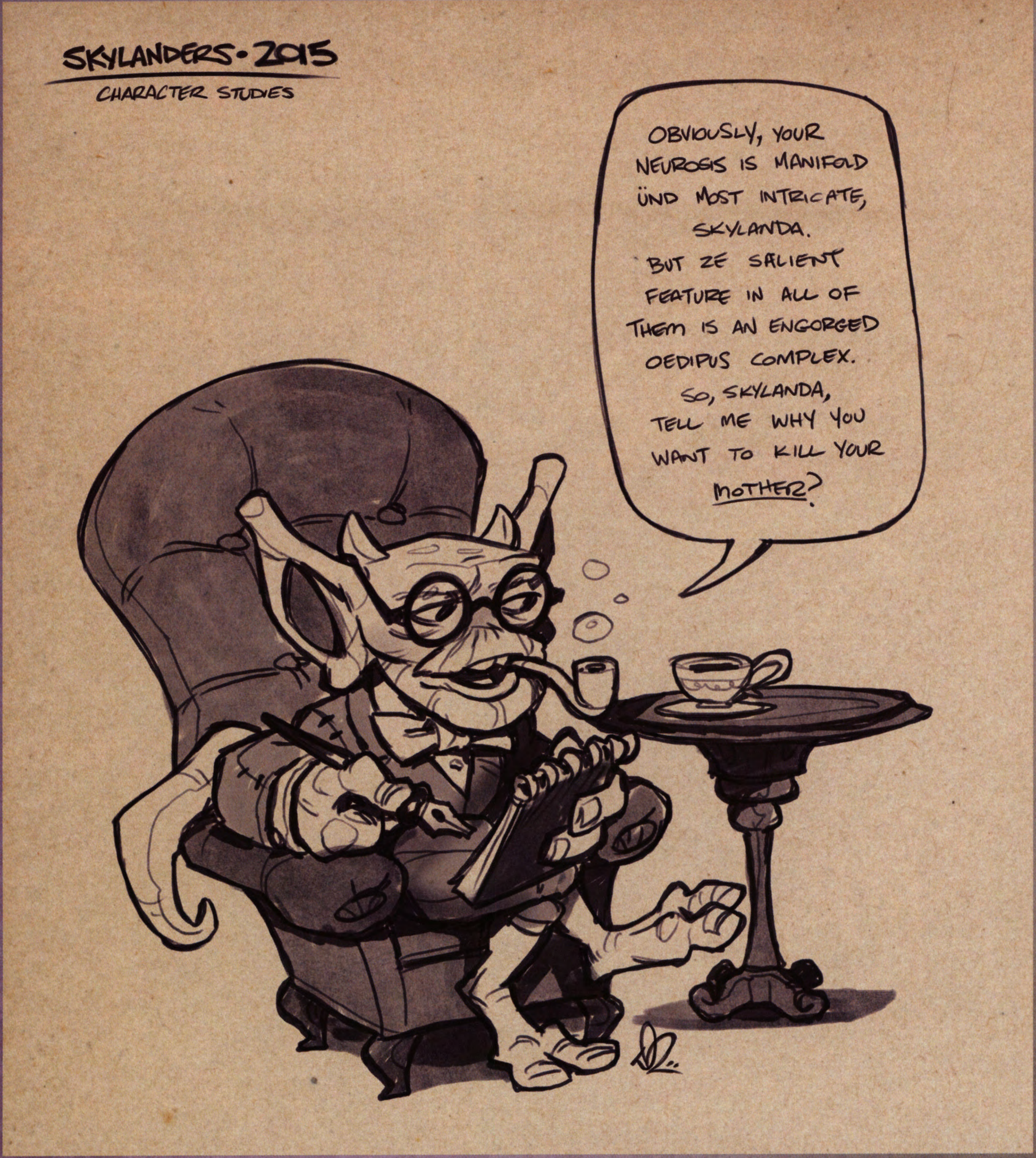


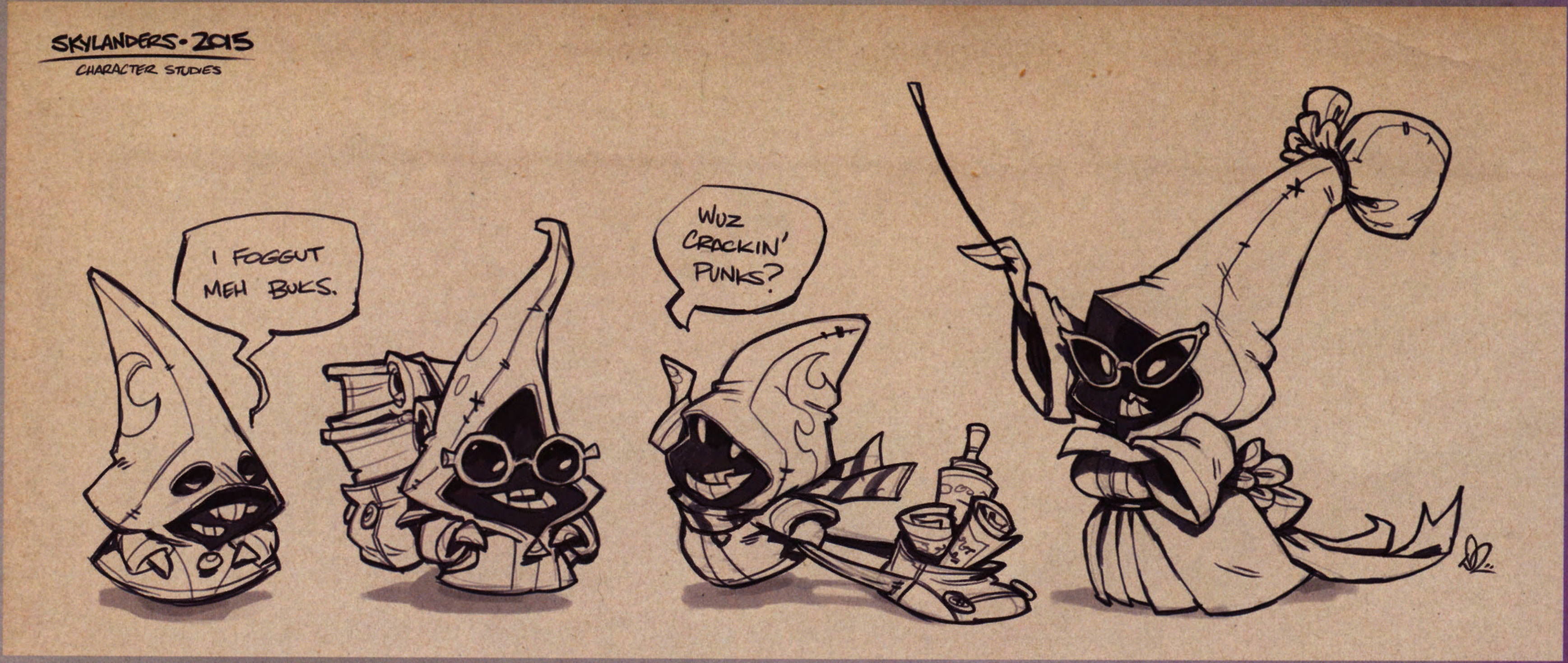


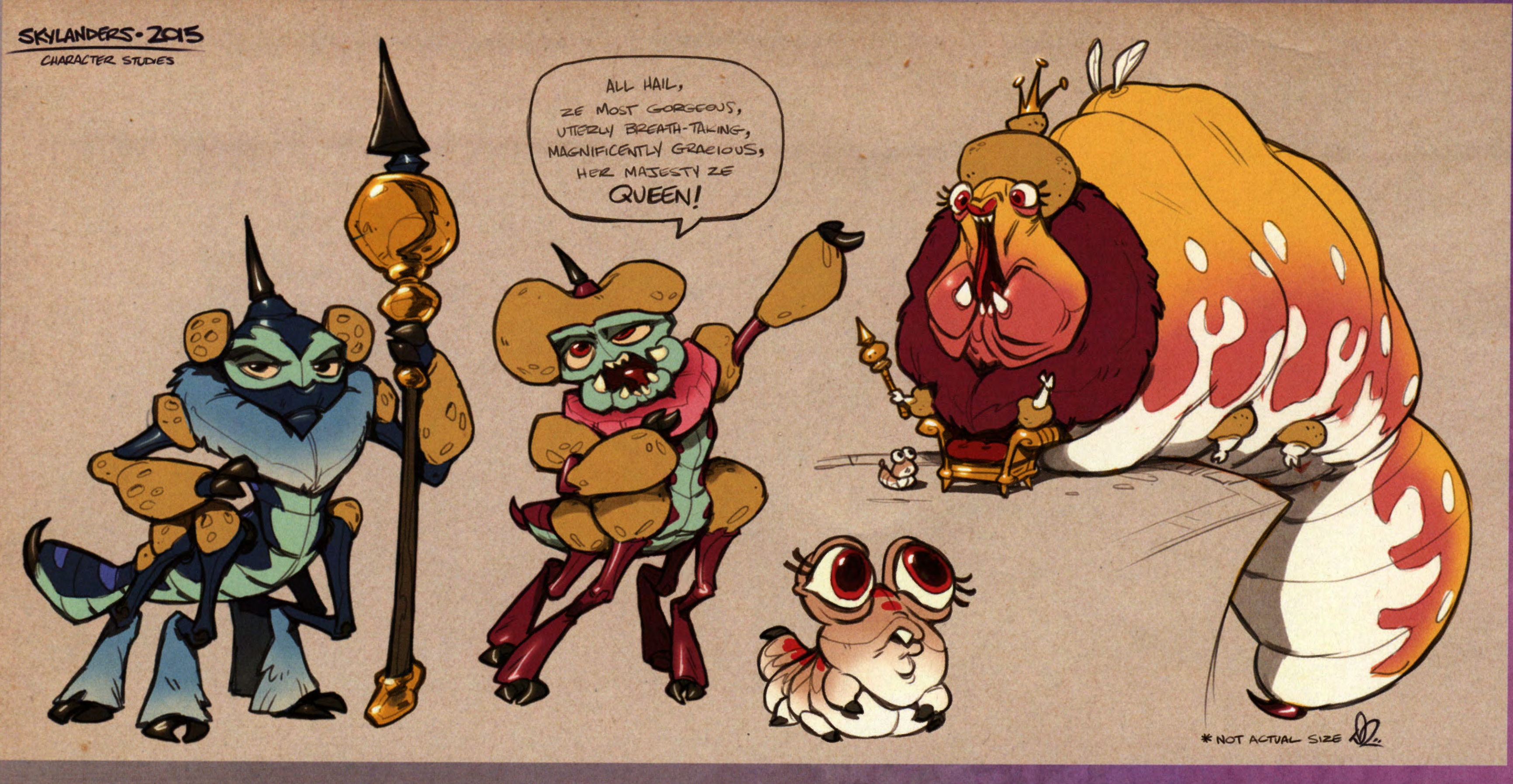
ENEMIES

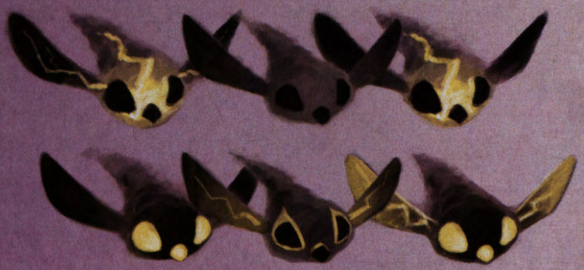


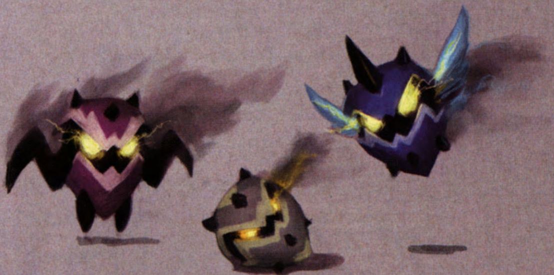


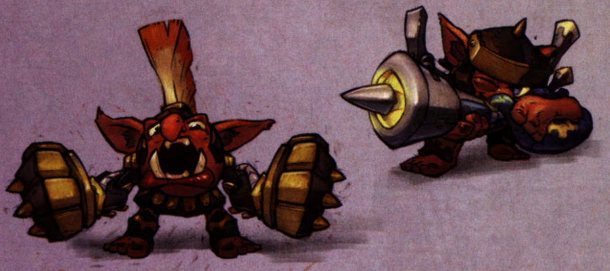

SKYLANDERS • 2015
CHARACTER STUDIES
OBVIOUSLY, YOUR NEUROSIS IS MANIFOLD ÜND MOST INTRICATE, SKYLANDA. BUT ZE SALIENT FEATURE IN ALL OF THEM IS AN ENGORGED OEDIPUS COMPLEX. SO, SKYLANDA, TELL ME WHY YOU WANT TO KILL YOUR MOTHER?

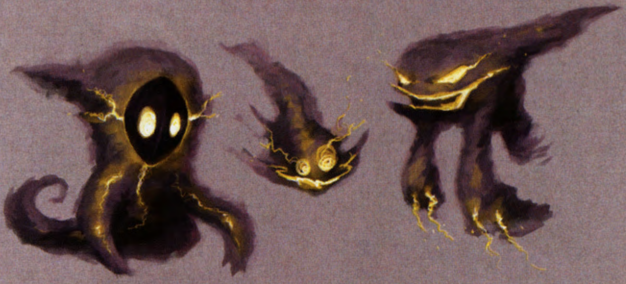

SKYLANDERS • 2015
CHARACTER STUDIES
I FOGGUT MEH BUKS.
WUZ CRACKIN' PUNKS?

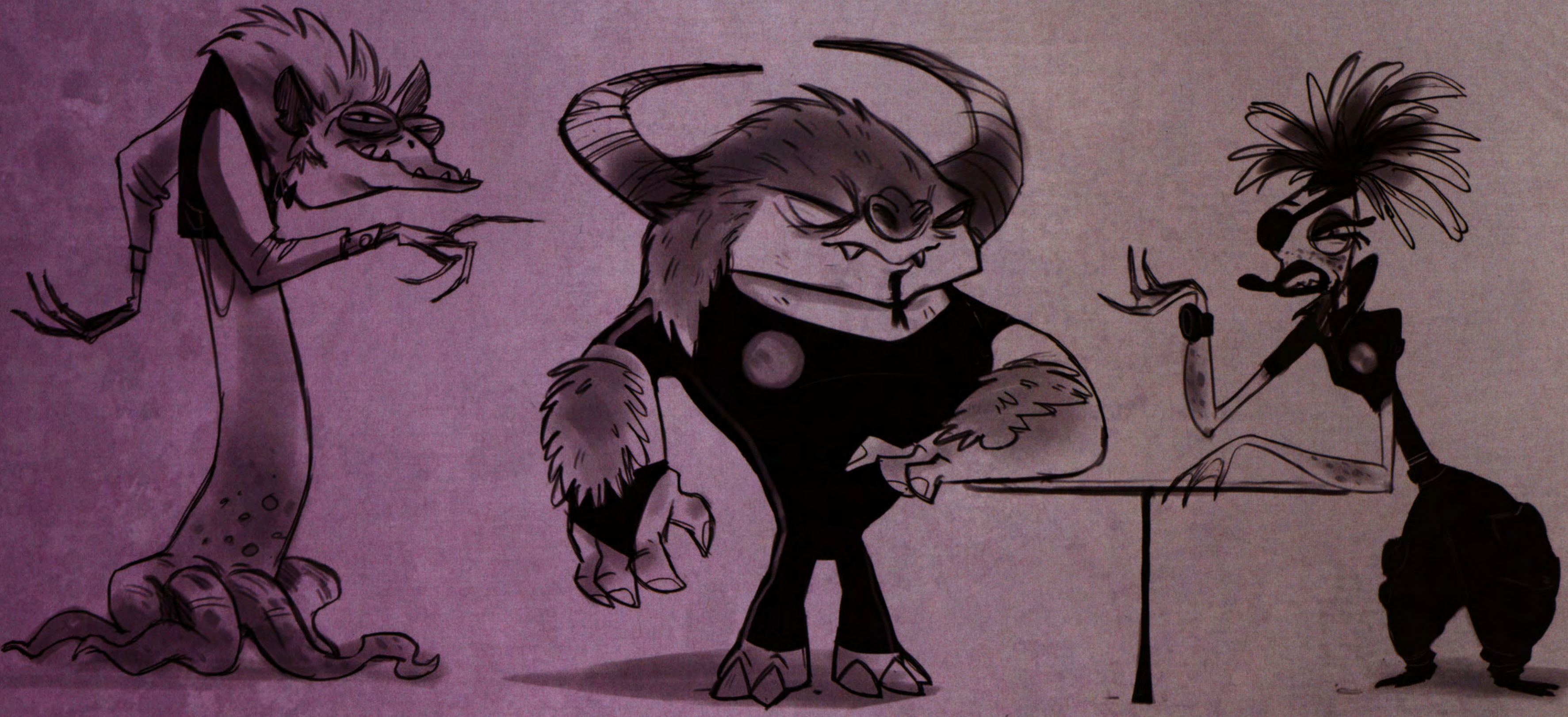

SKYLANDERS • 2015
CHARACTER STUDIES
ALL HAIL, ZE MOST GORGEOUS, UTTERLY BREATH-TAKING, MAGNIFICENTLY GRACIOUS, HER MAJESTY ZE QUEEN!
* NOT ACTUAL SIZE

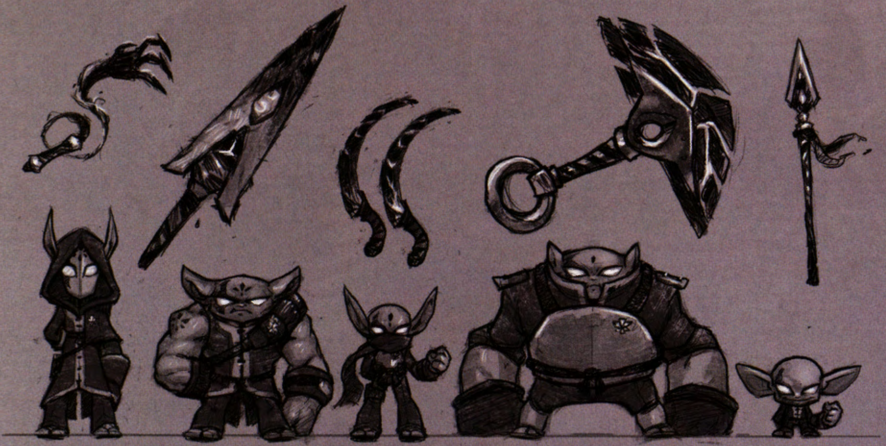


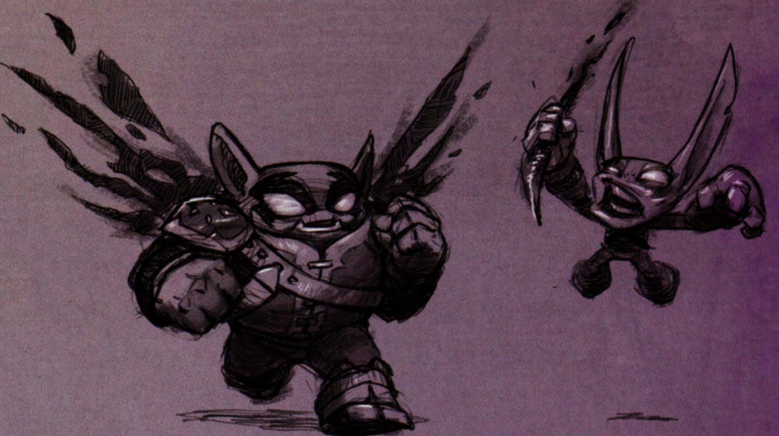


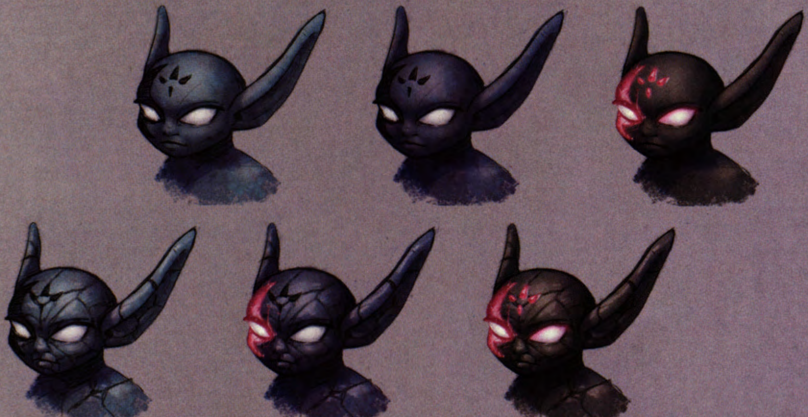


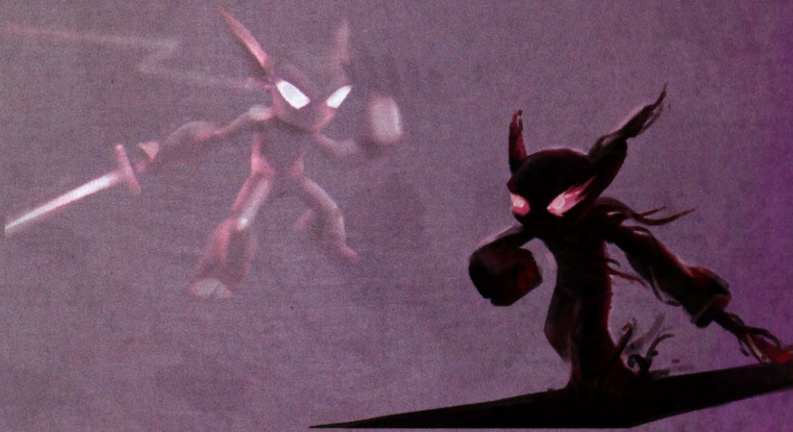


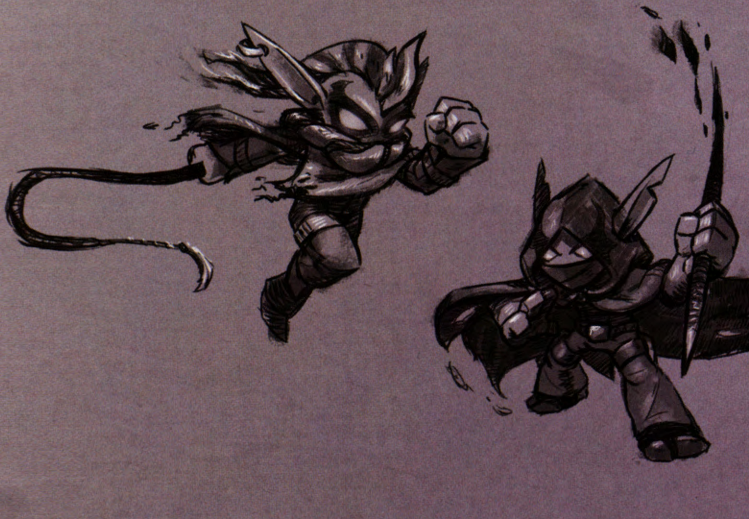


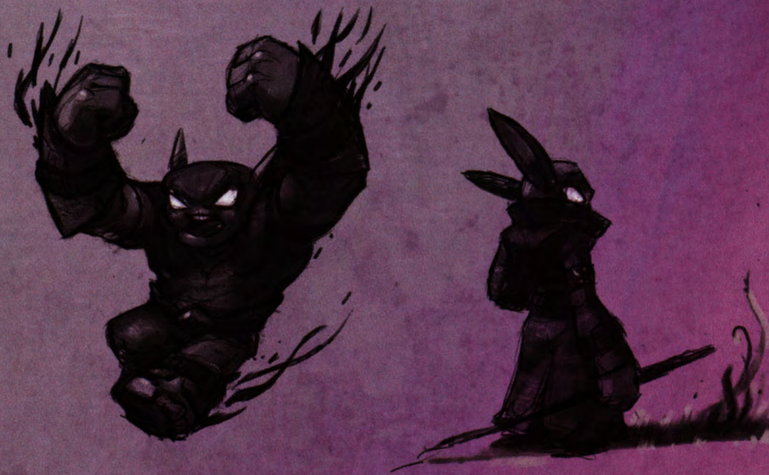


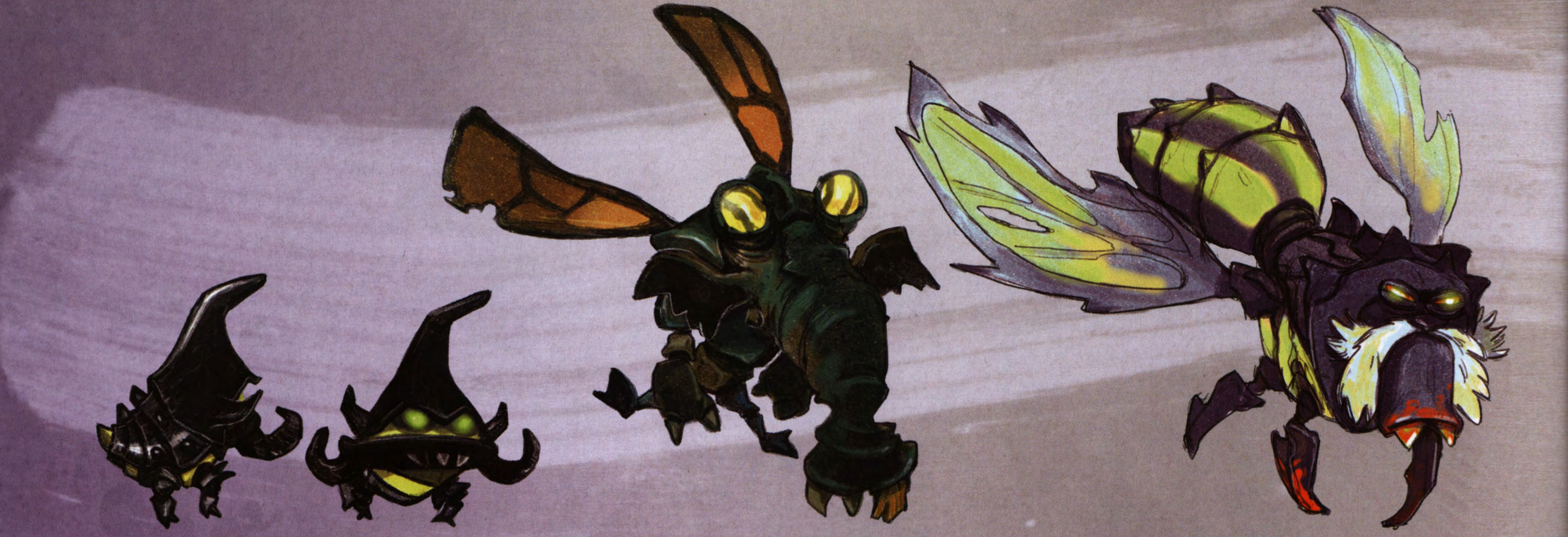


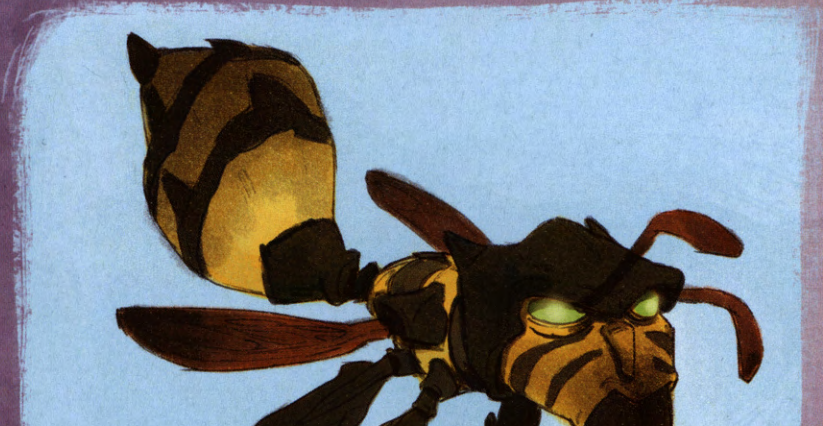


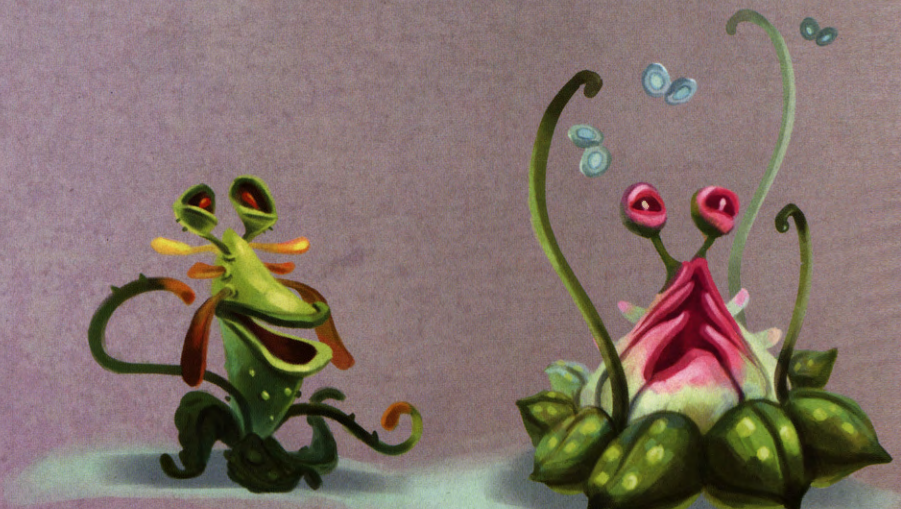


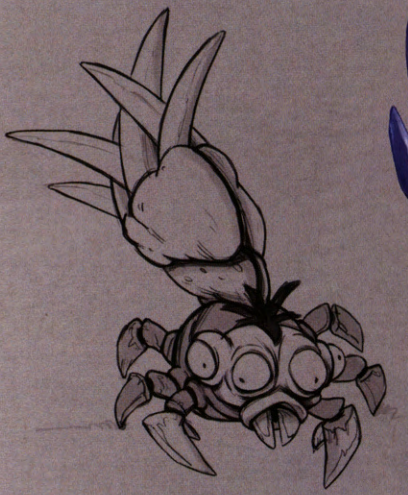


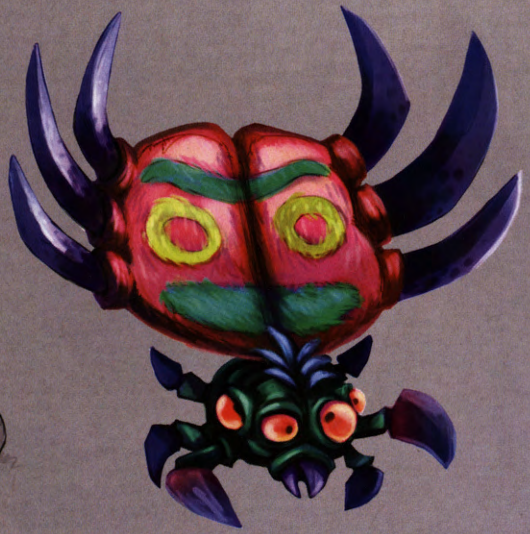


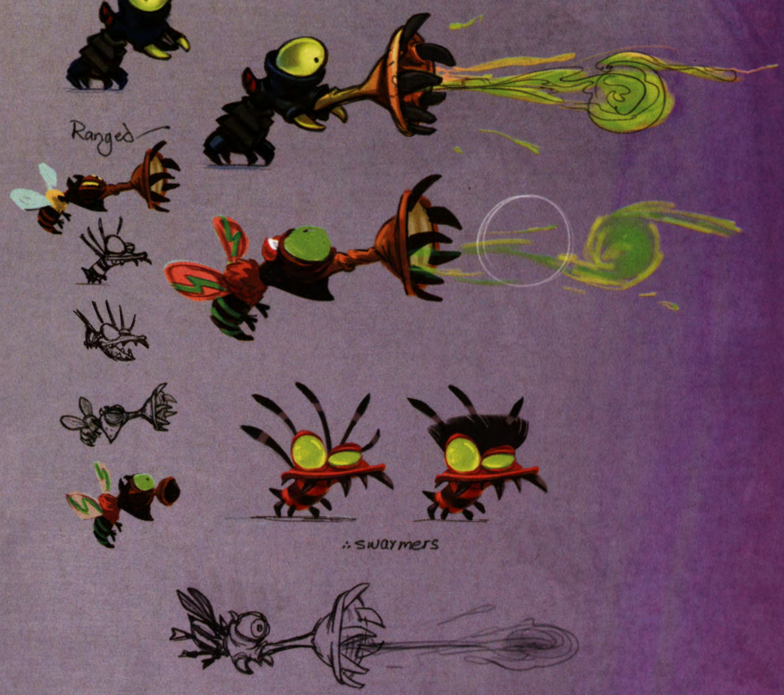


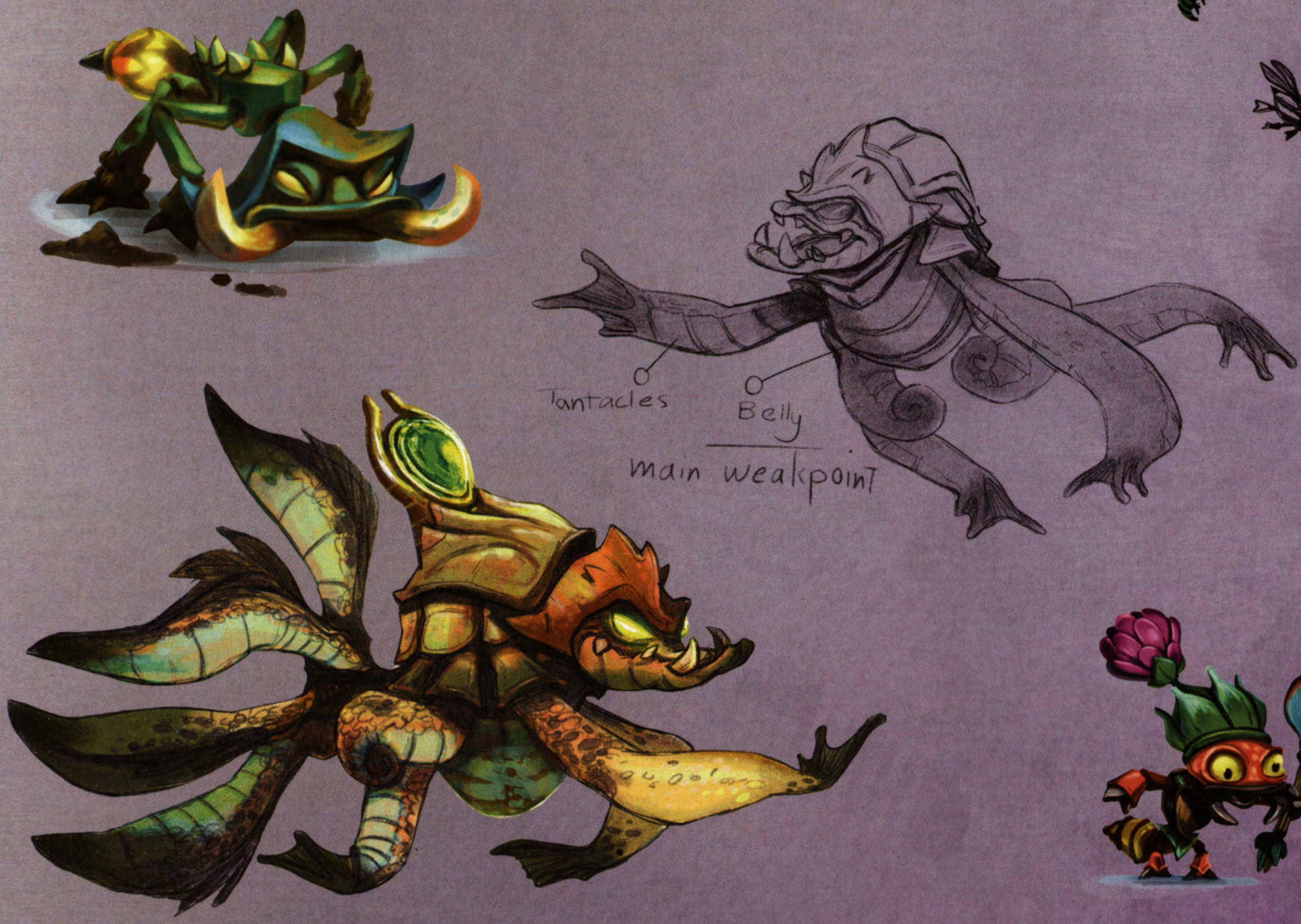


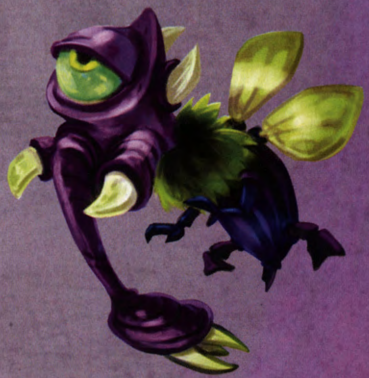


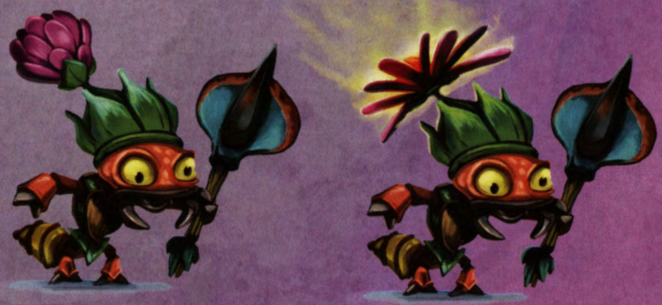


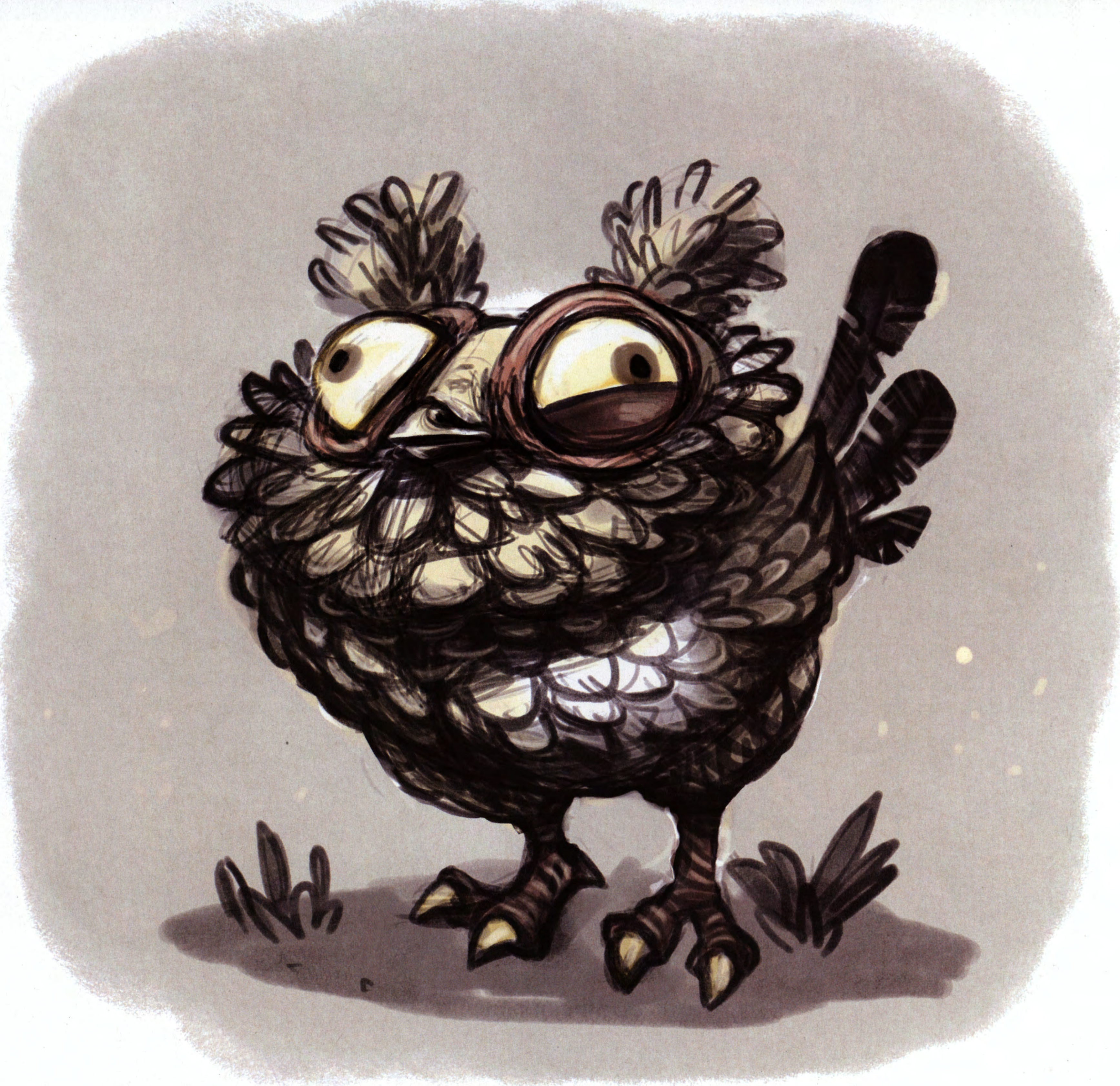


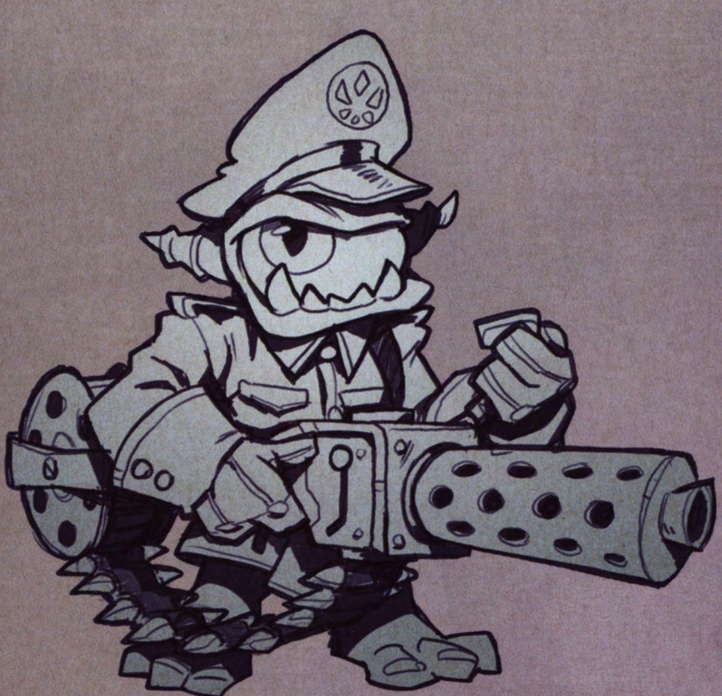

Ranged
∴ swarmers

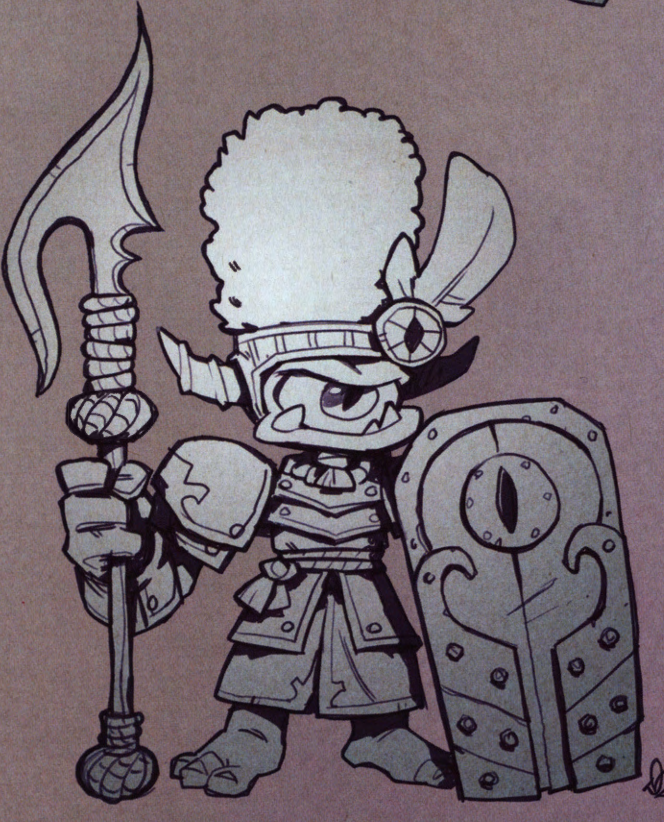

Tantacles
Belly
main weakpoint

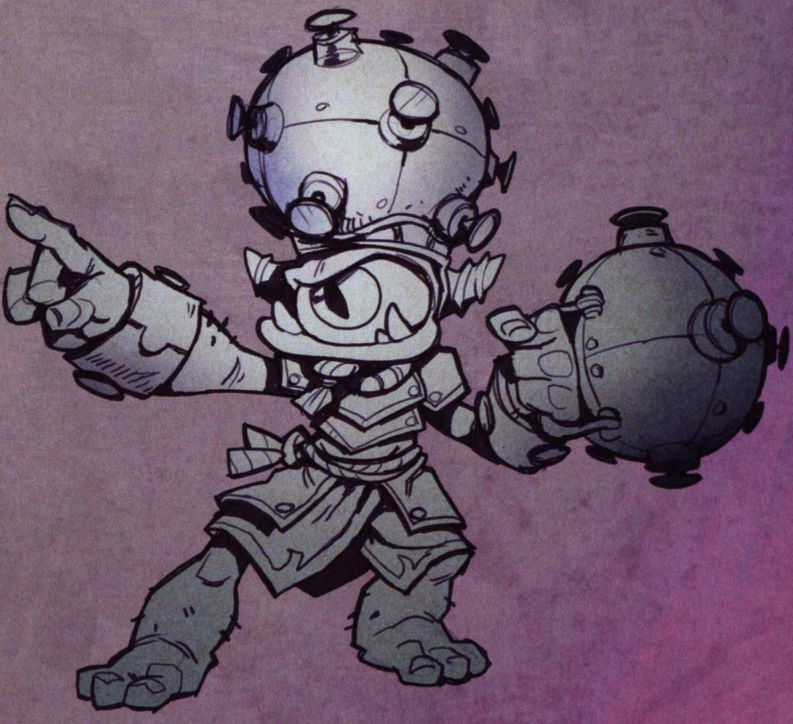


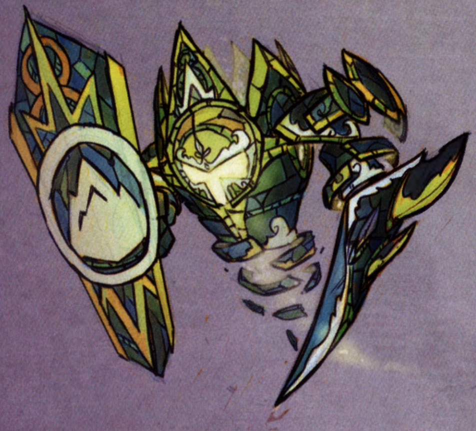


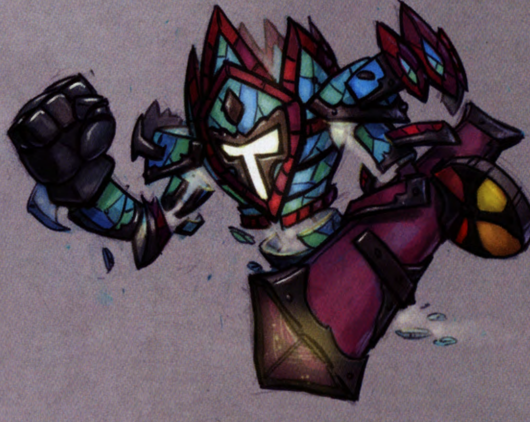


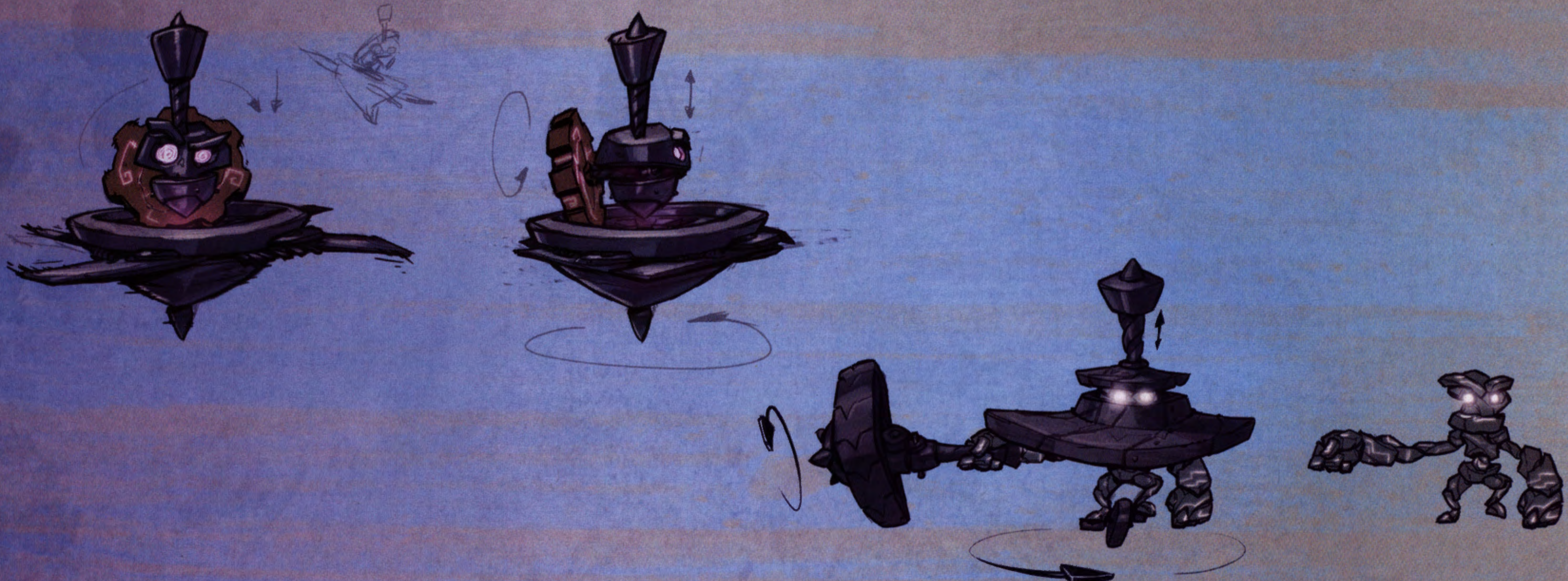


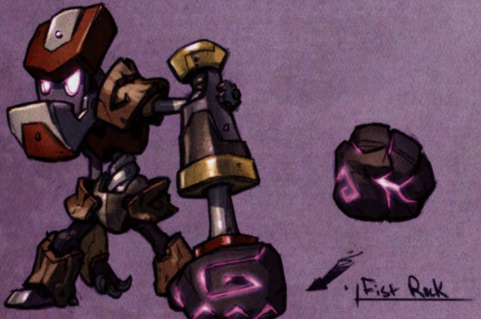


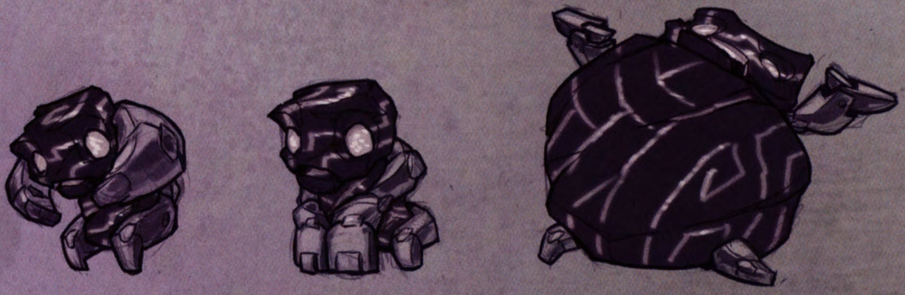


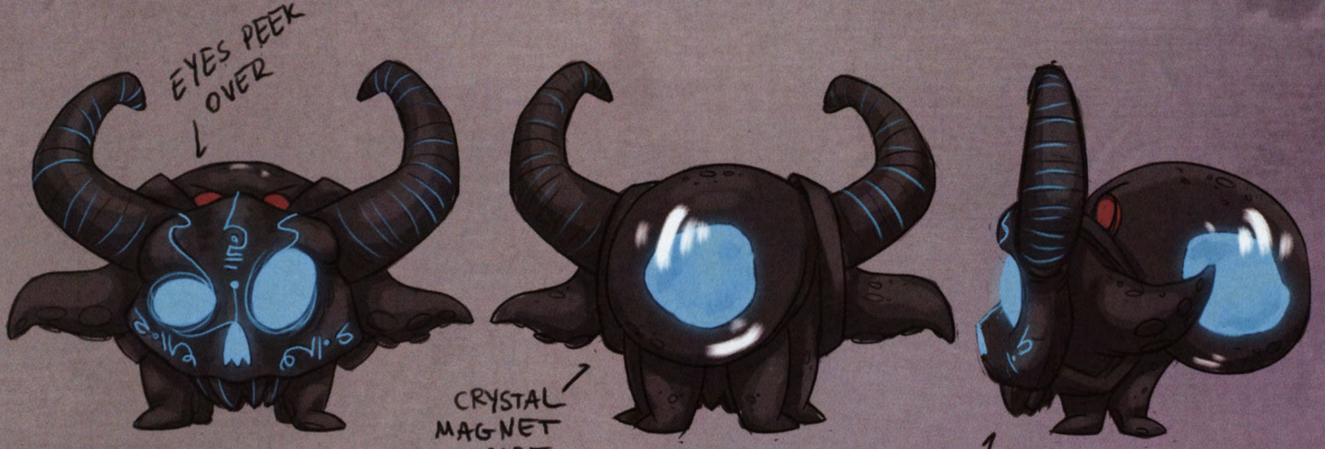


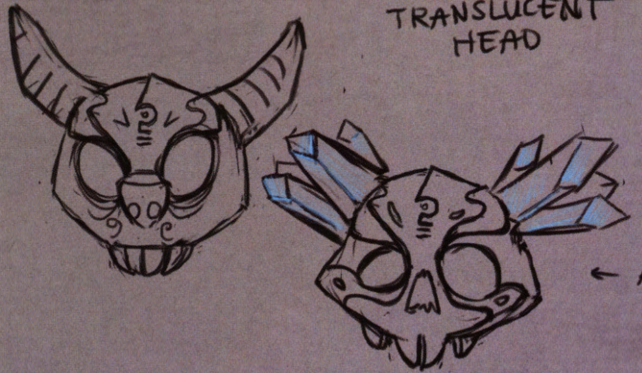


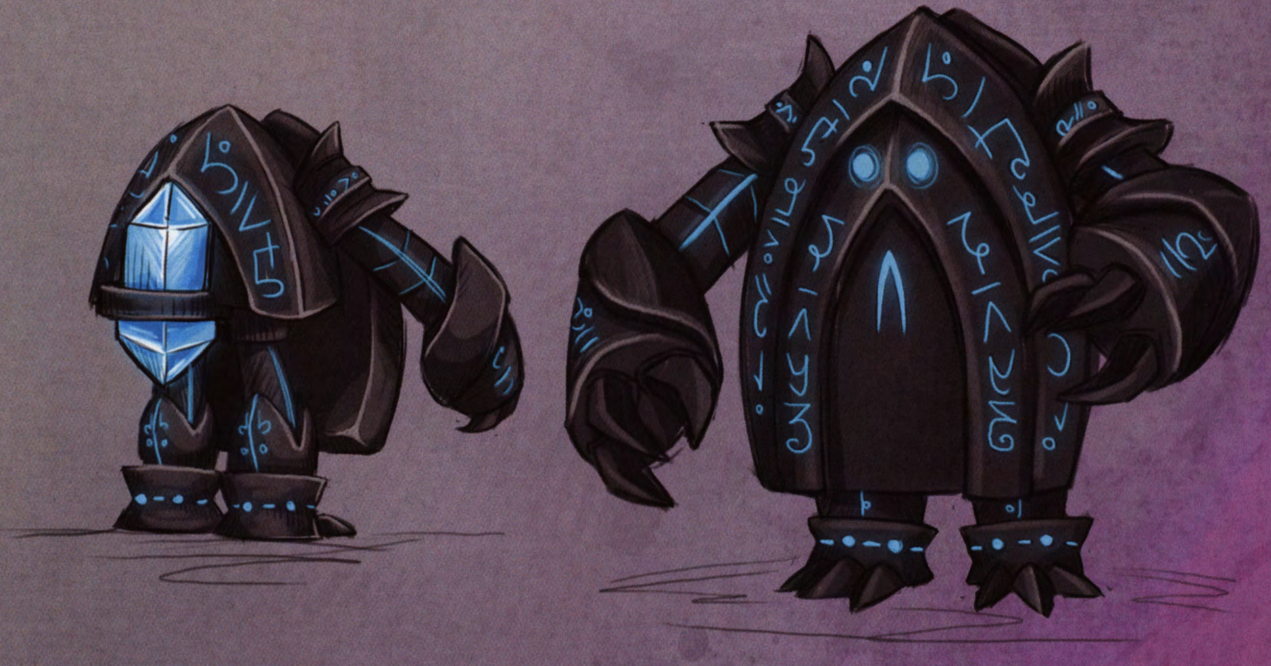


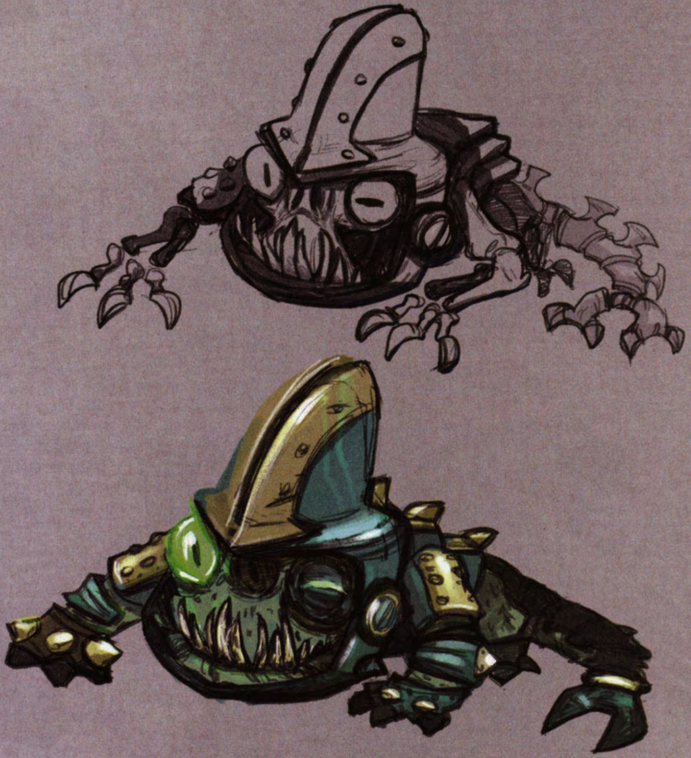

Fist Rock

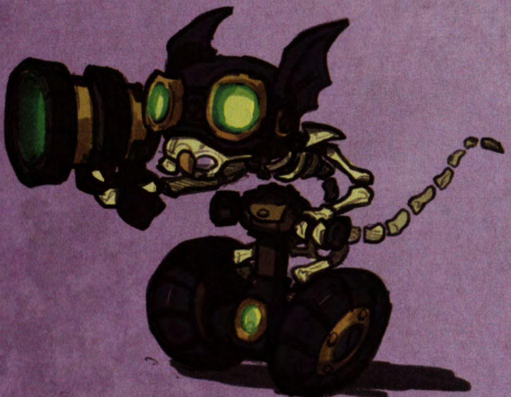


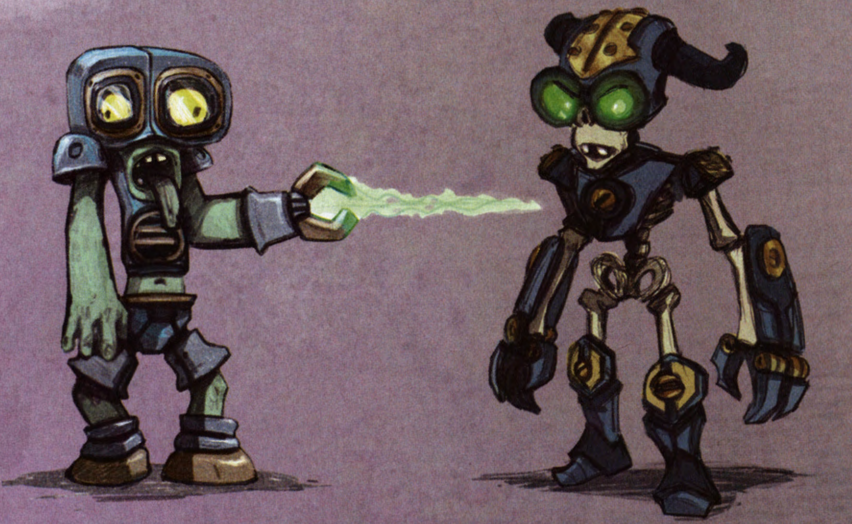

EYES PEEK OVER
CRYSTAL MAGNET INSIDE TRANSLUCENT HEAD
WEARS MASK STRAPPED ON FACE

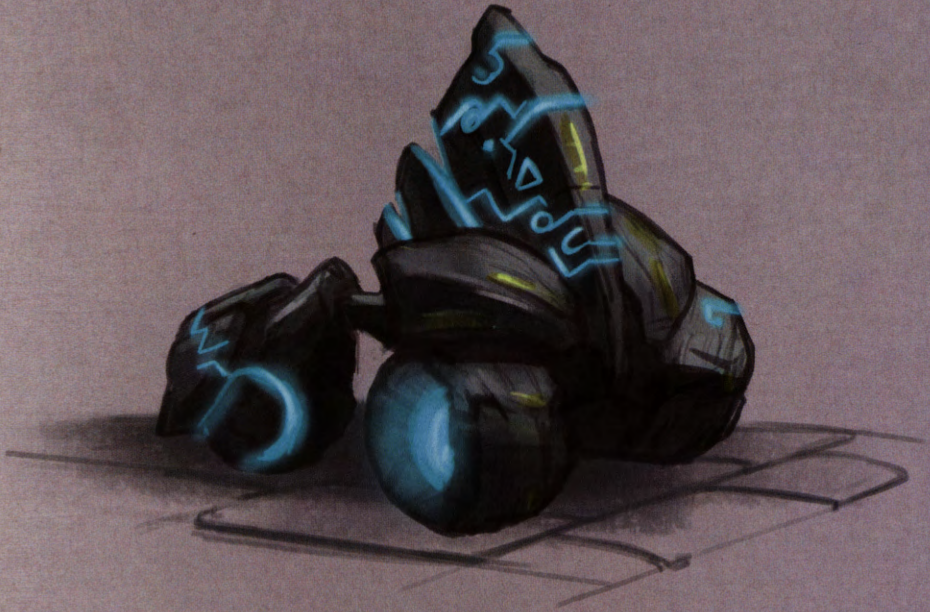

ALTERNATE MASK DESIGNS

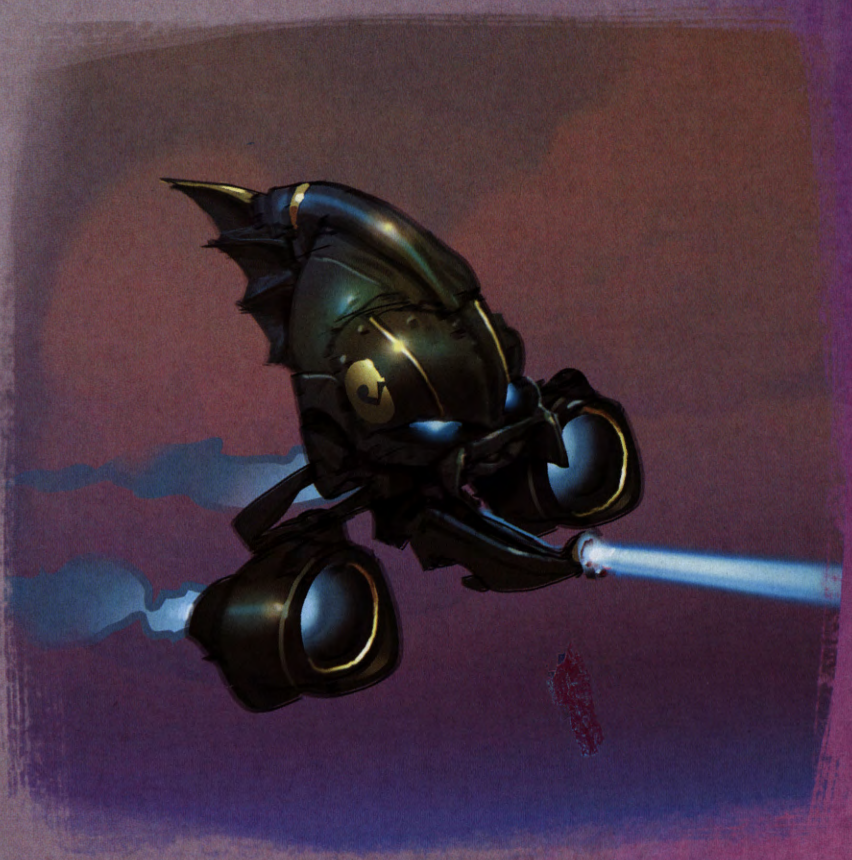


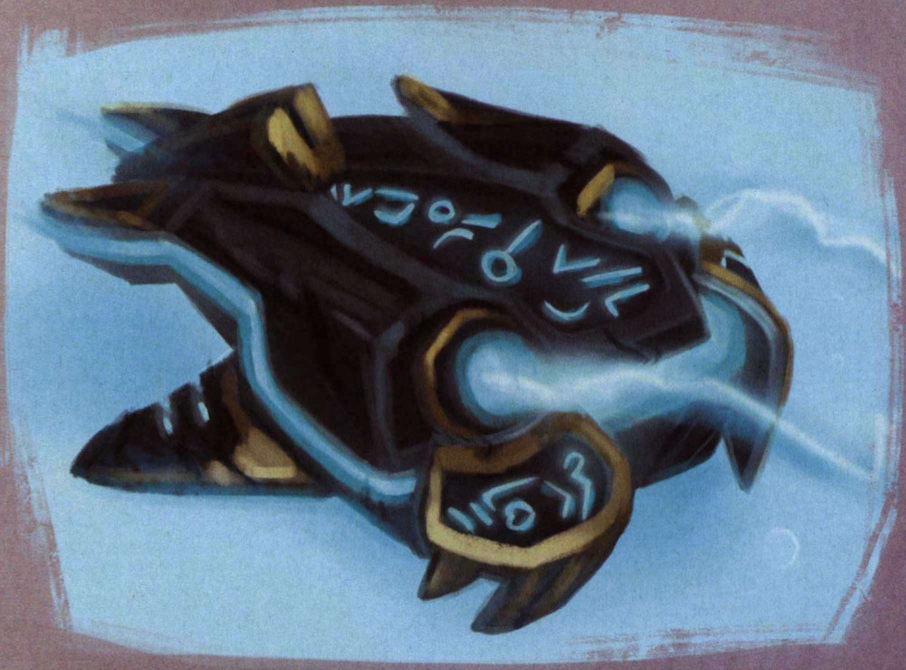


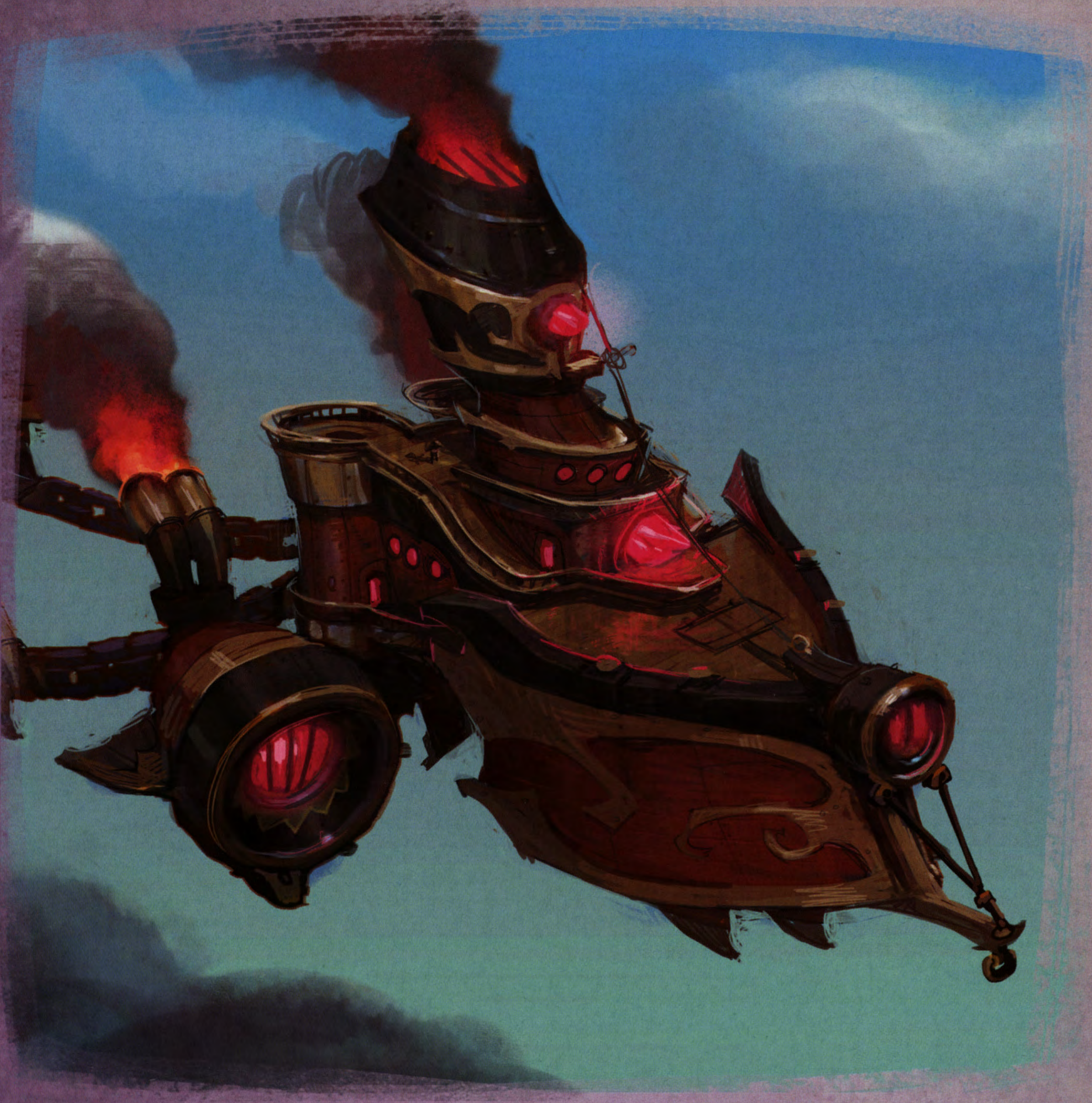




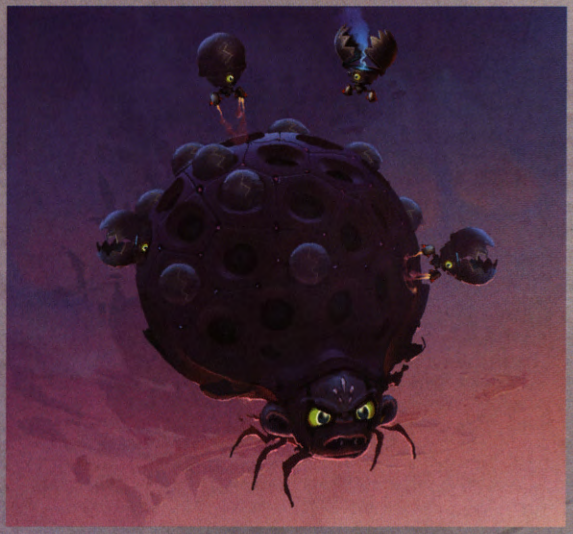


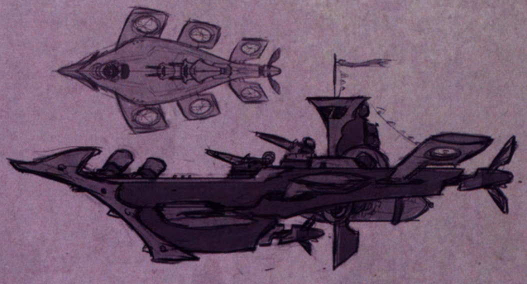


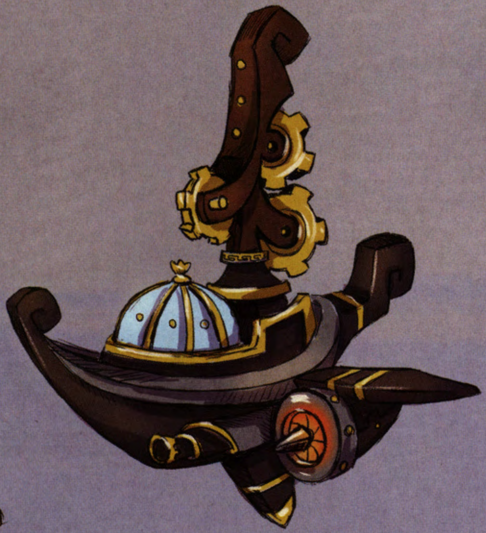


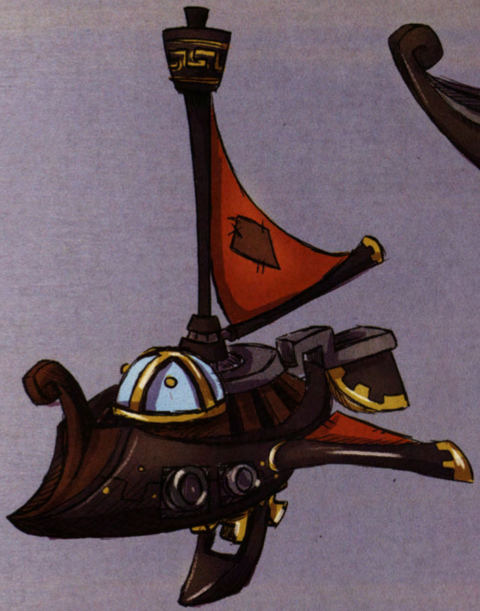


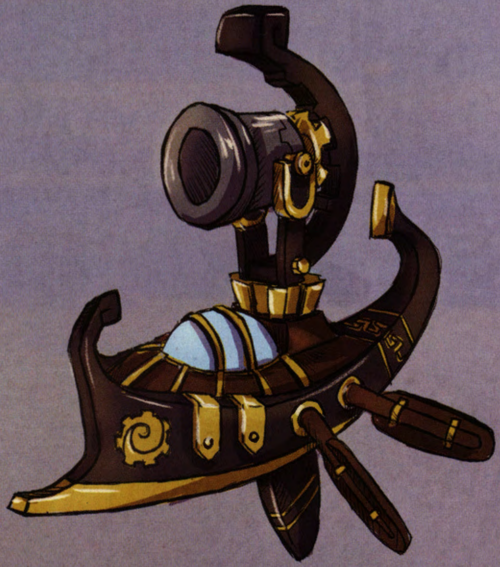
1
2

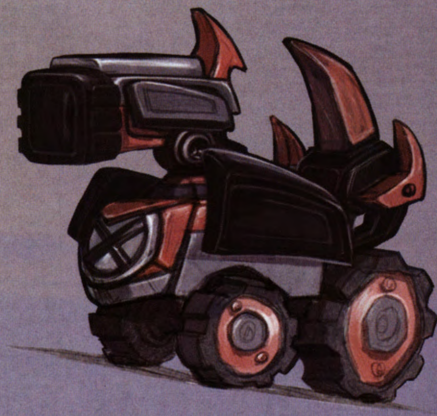


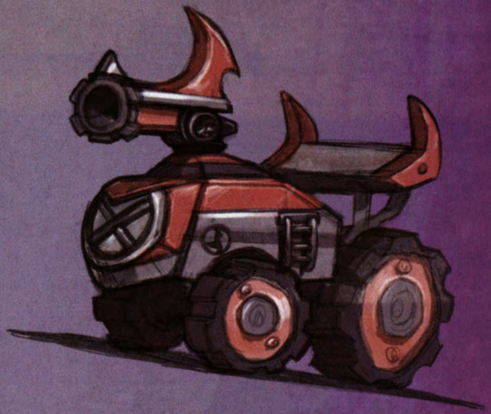


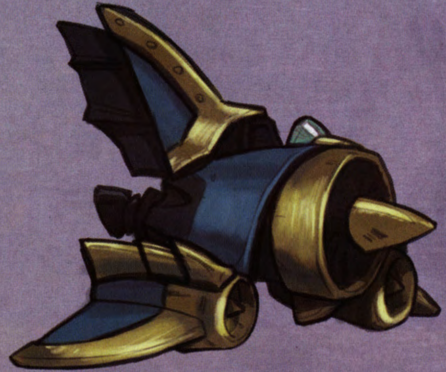


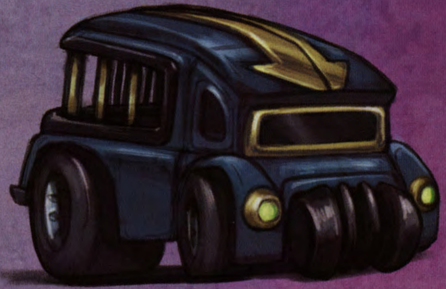


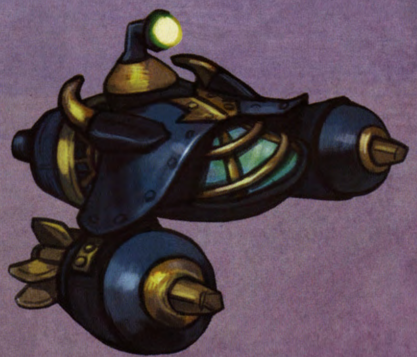


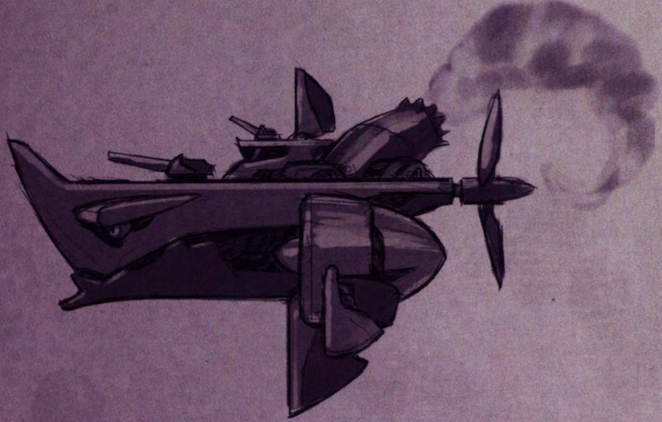


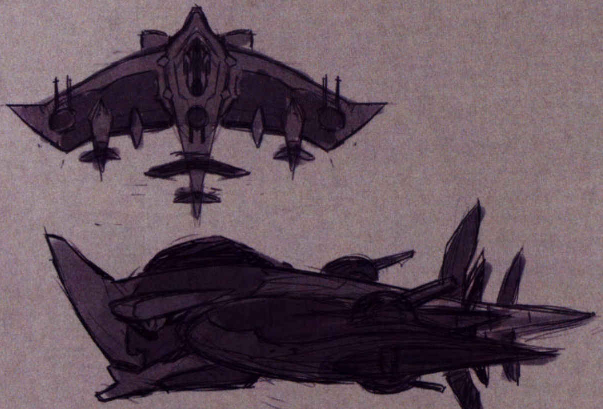


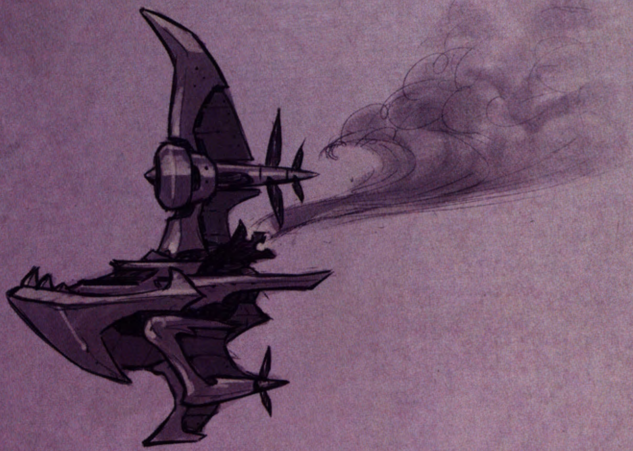


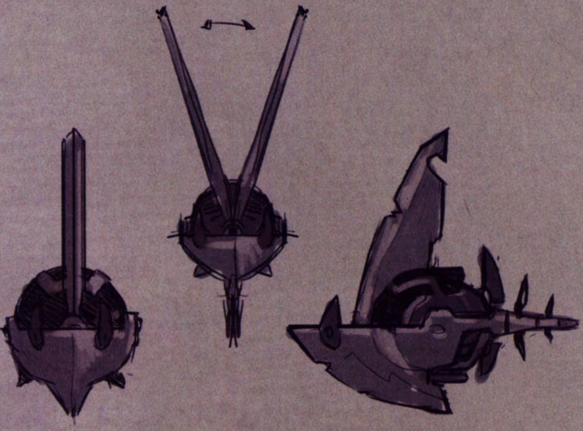


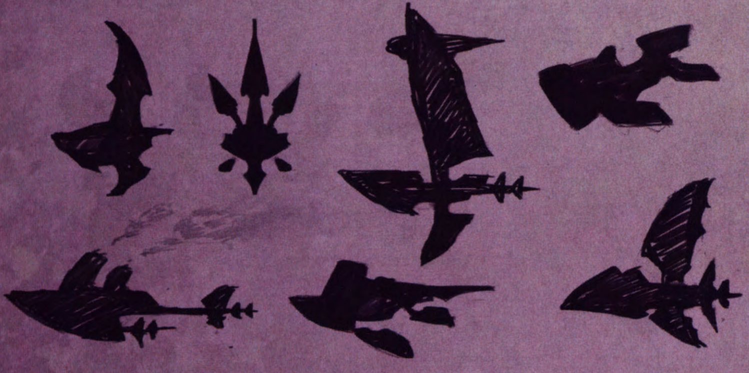


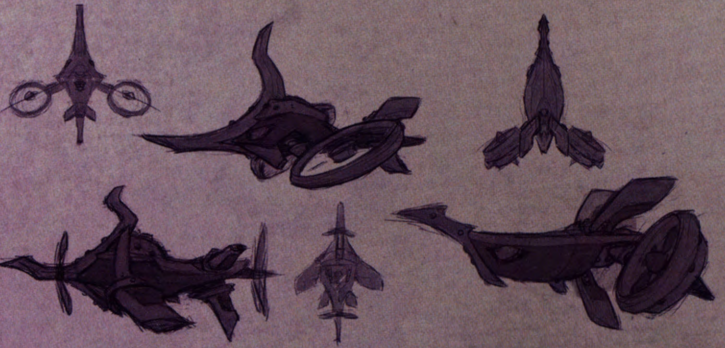


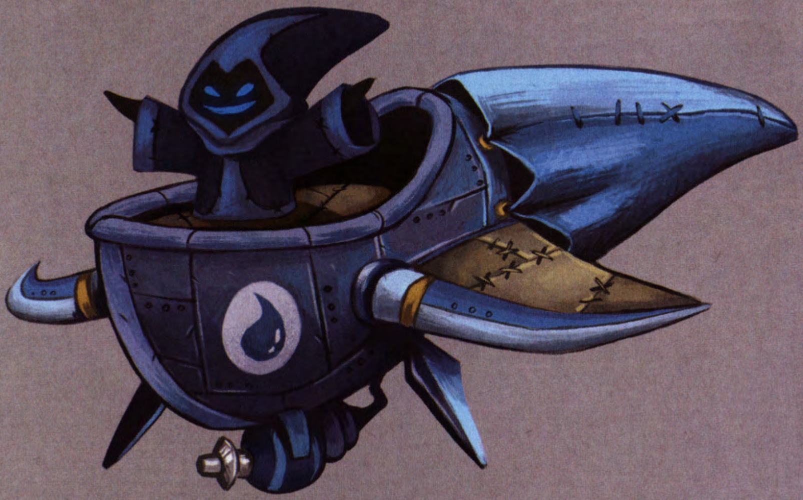


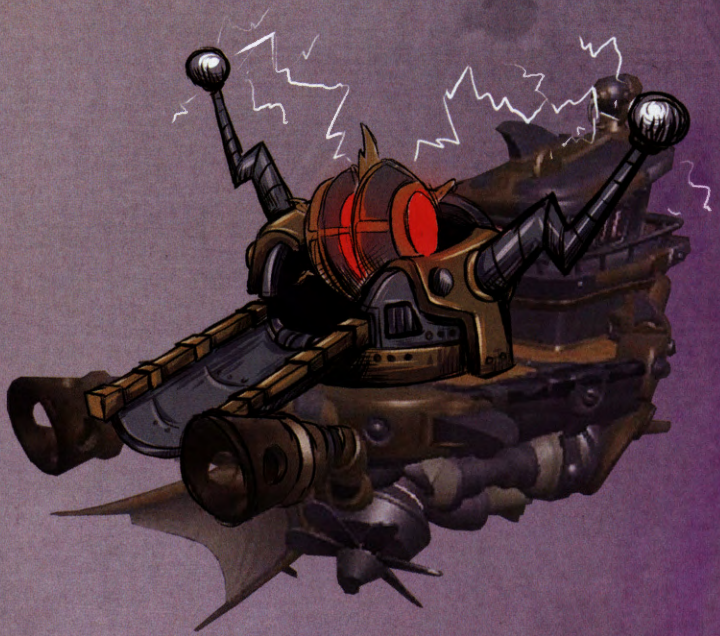


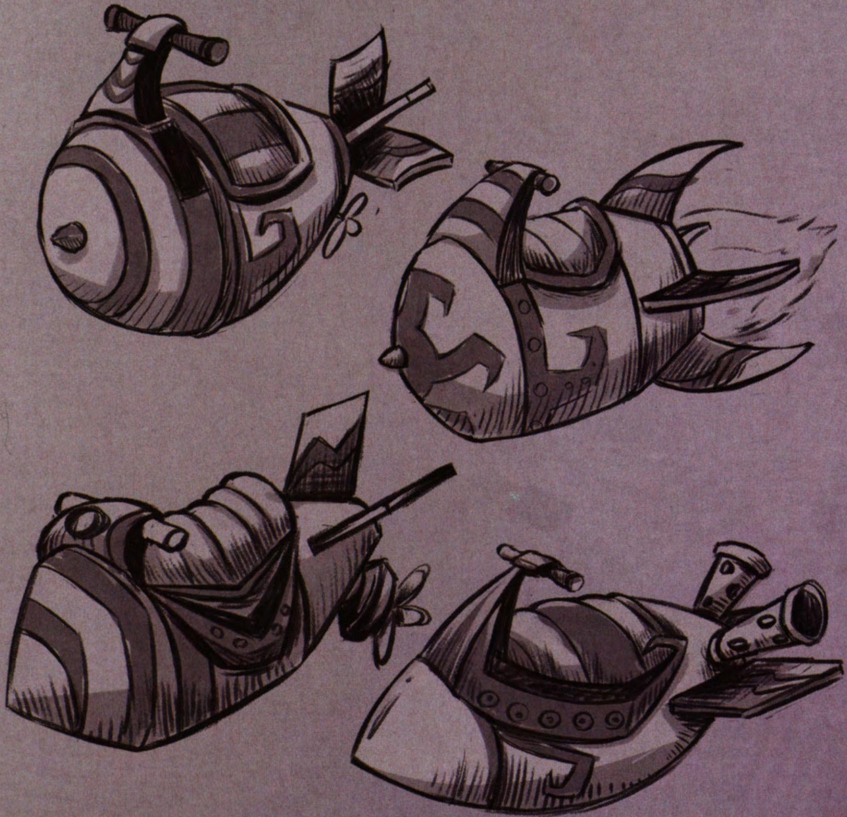


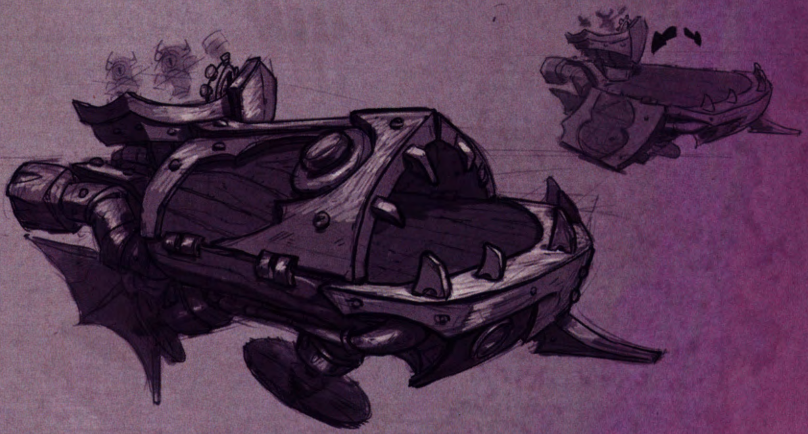


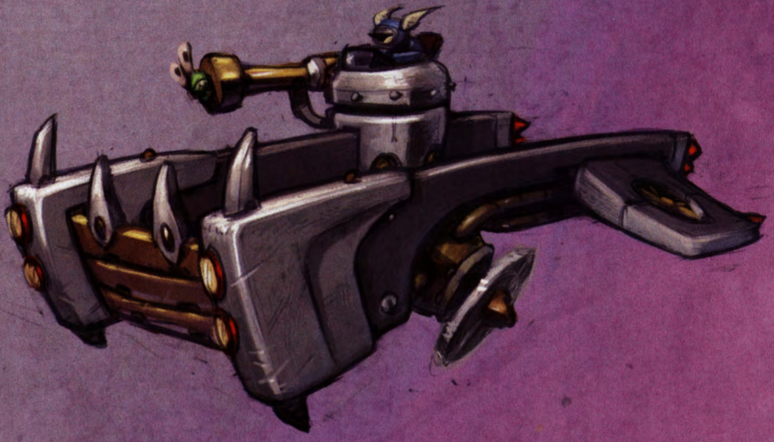


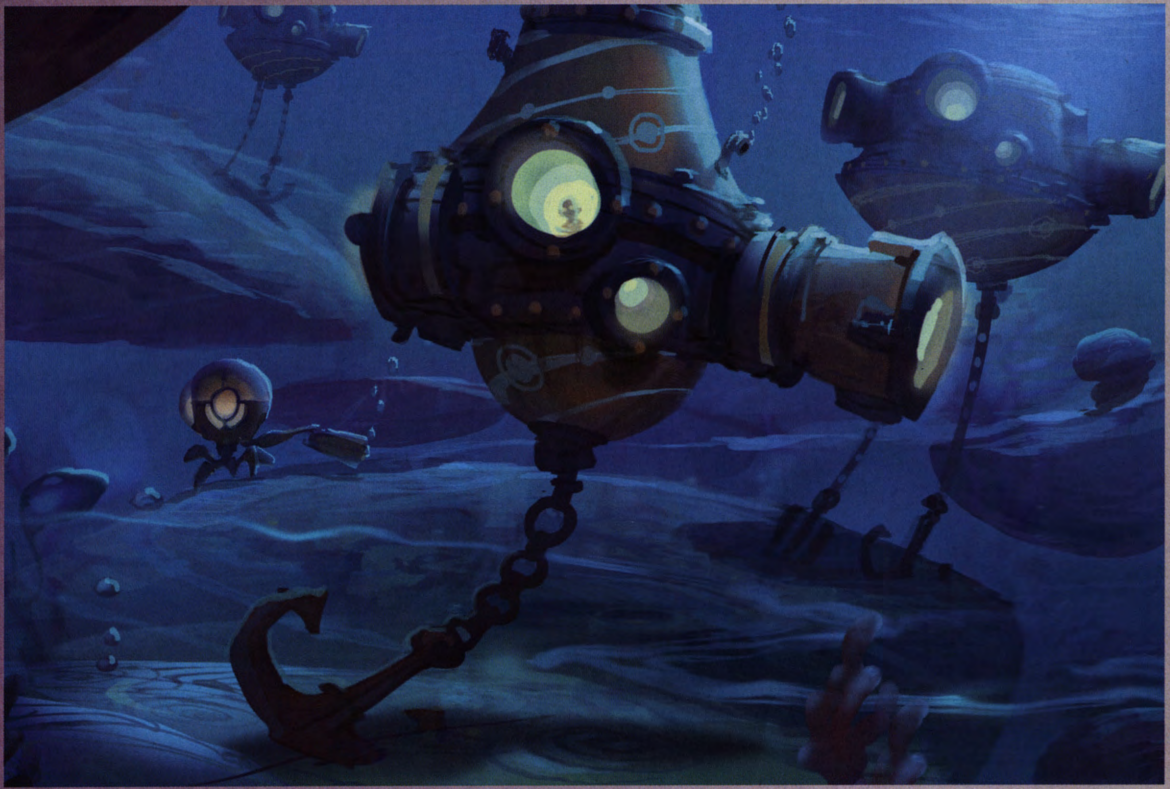


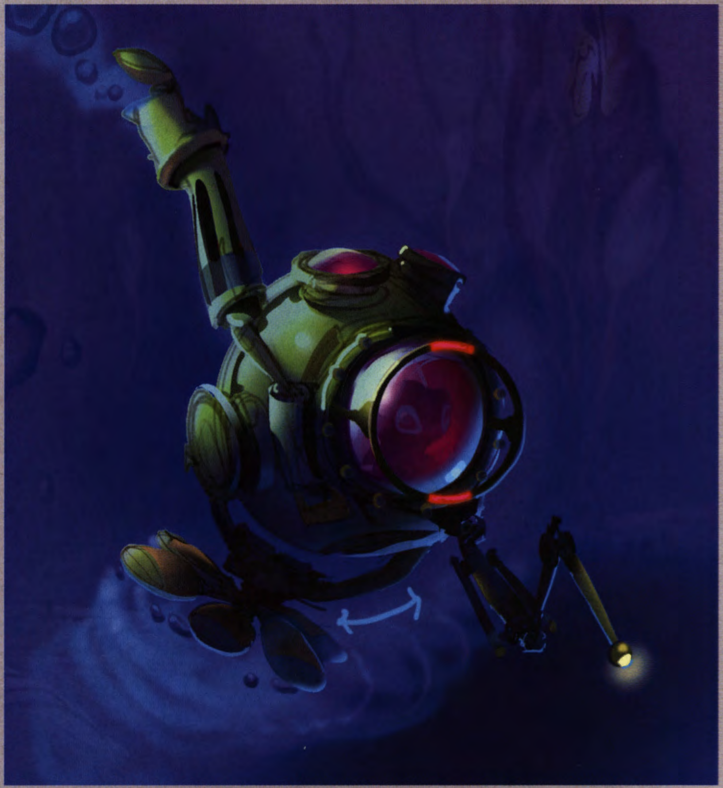


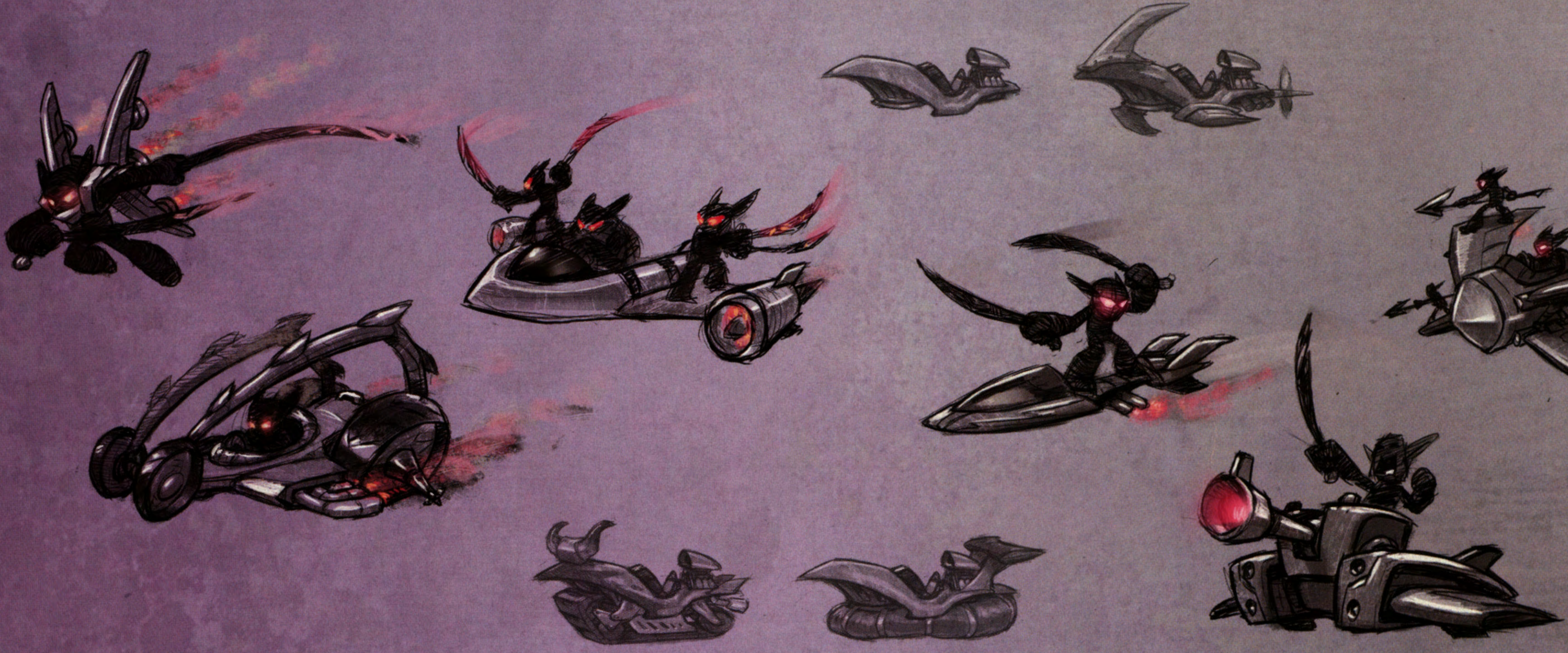


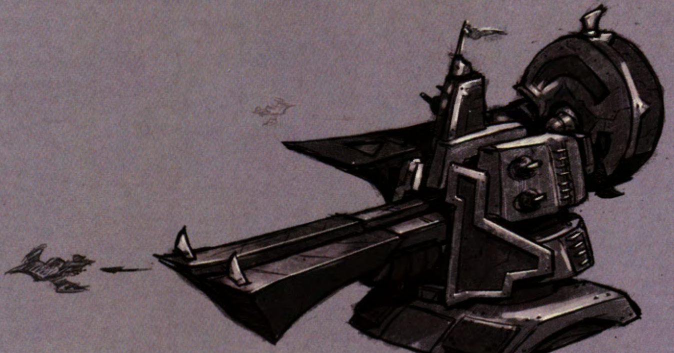


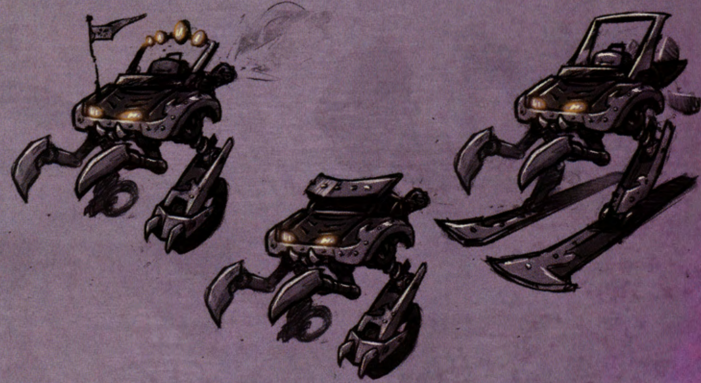


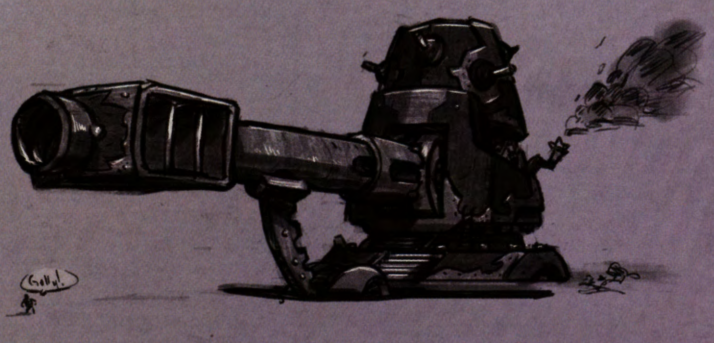




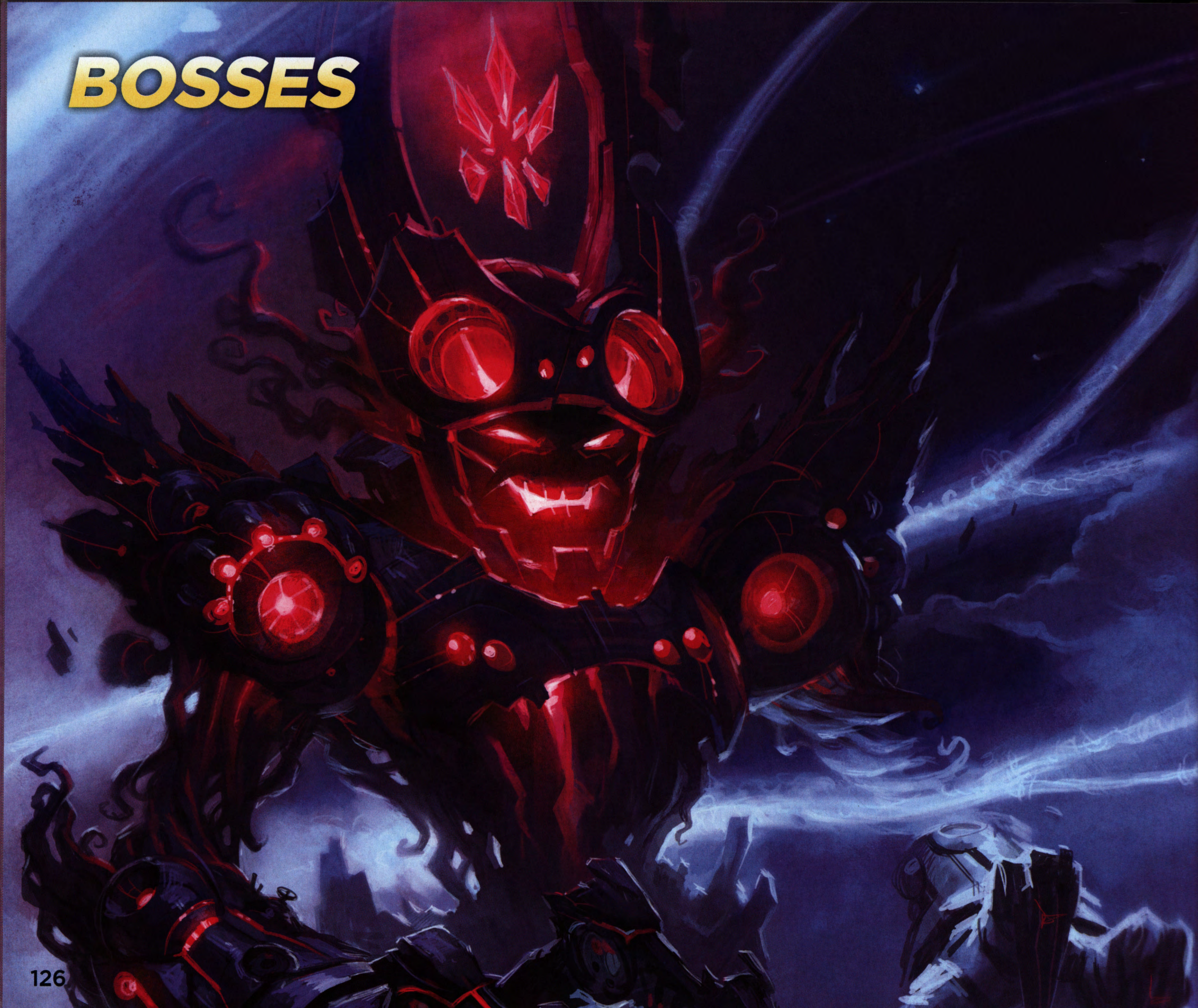


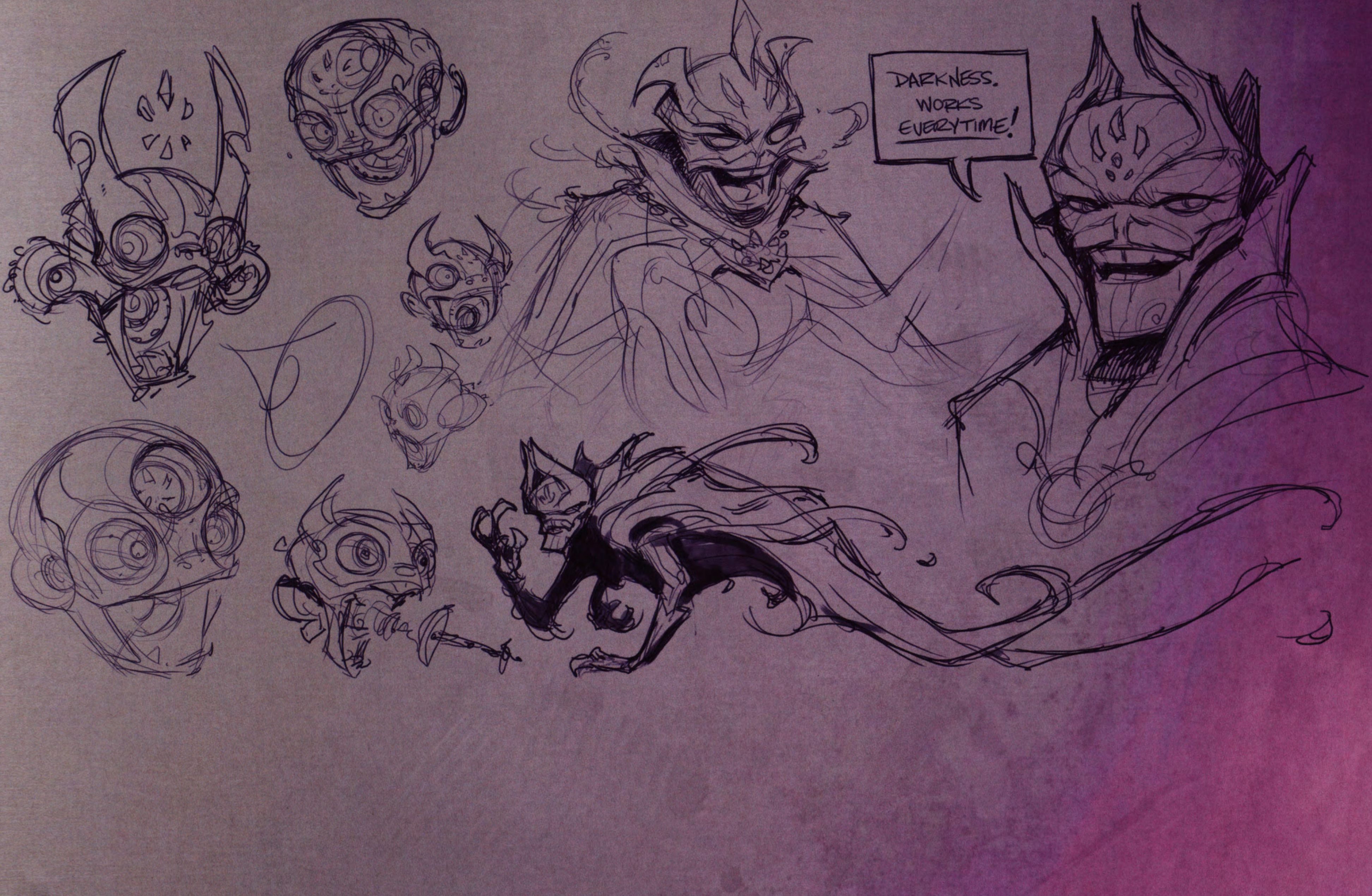


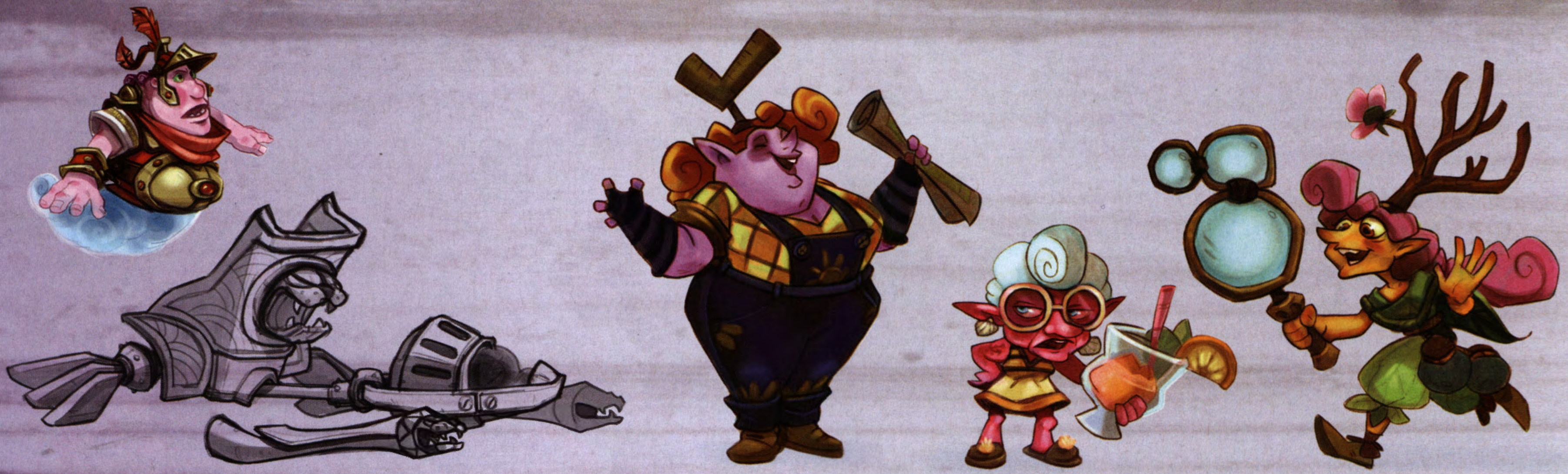


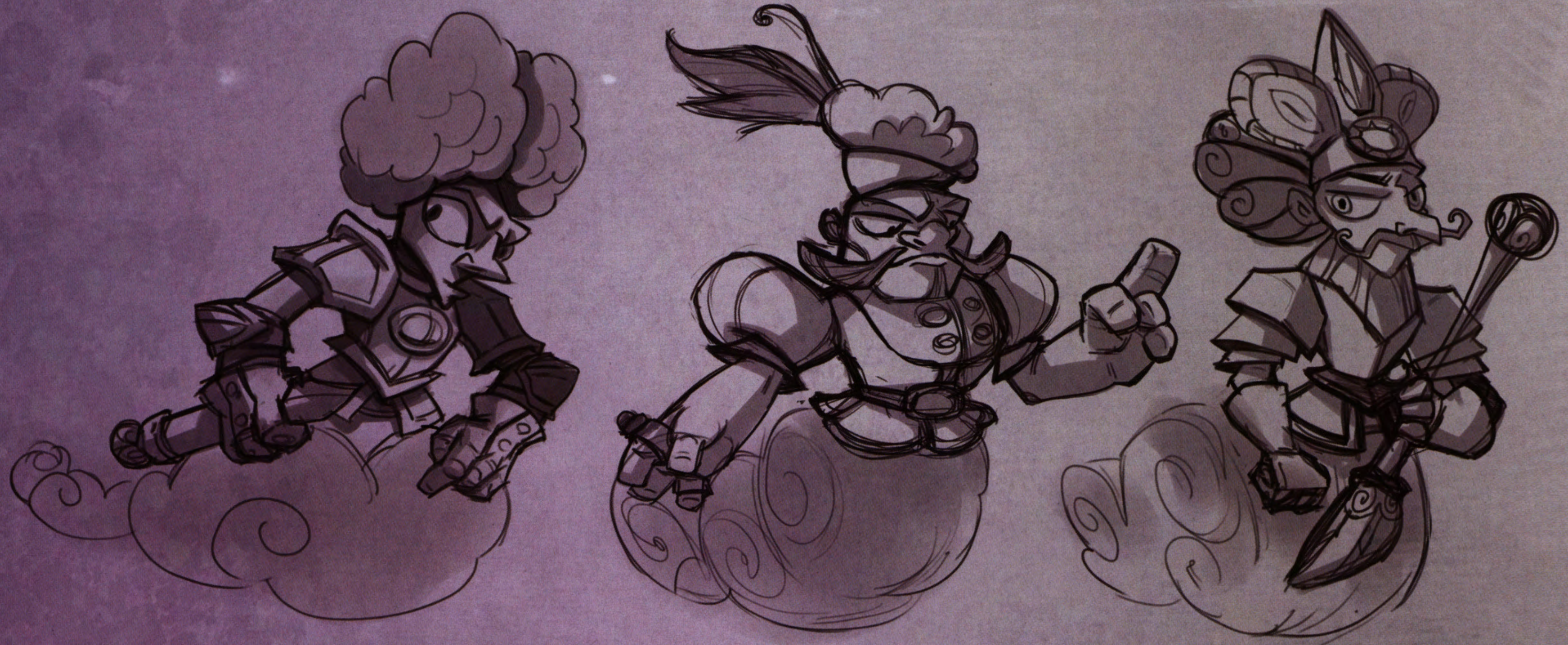

Golly!

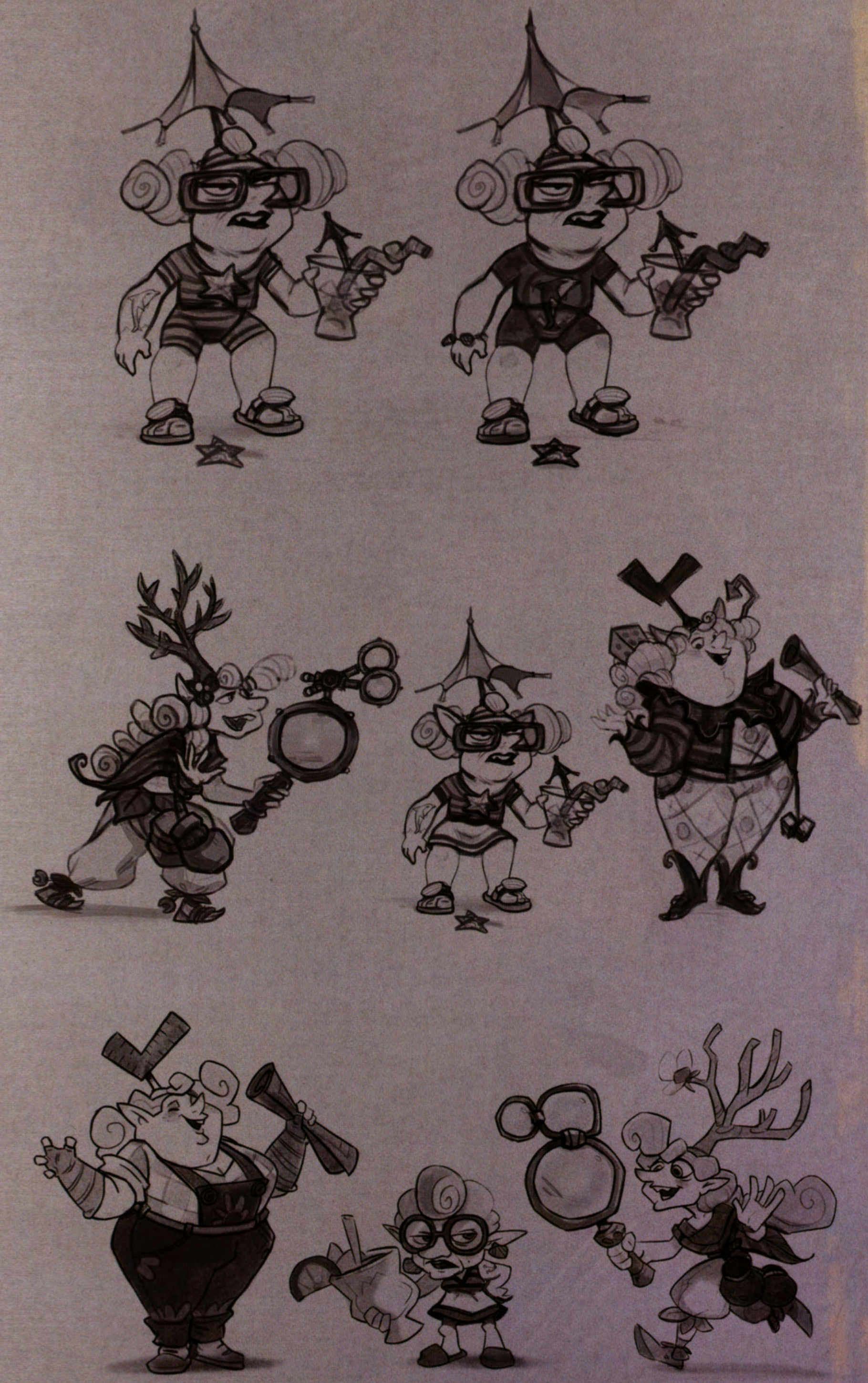
BOSSES

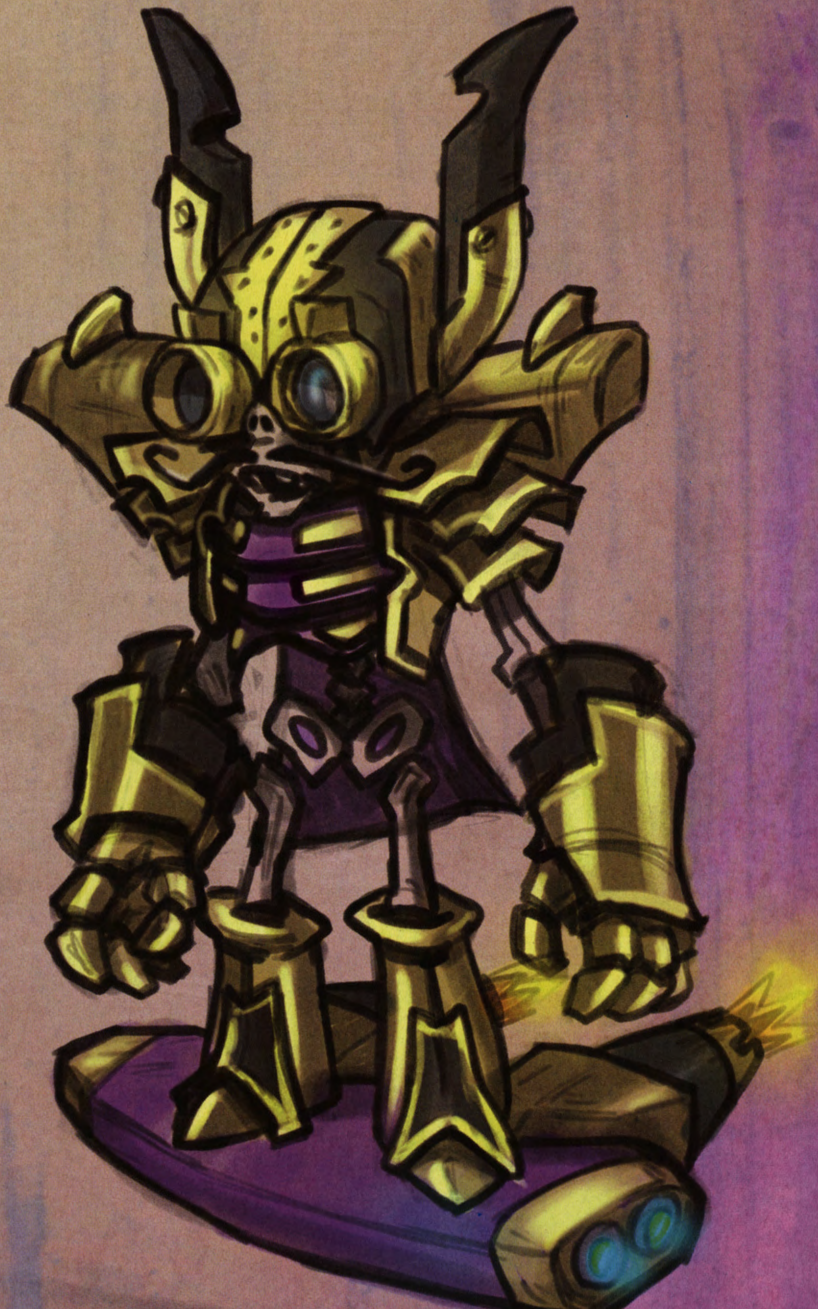


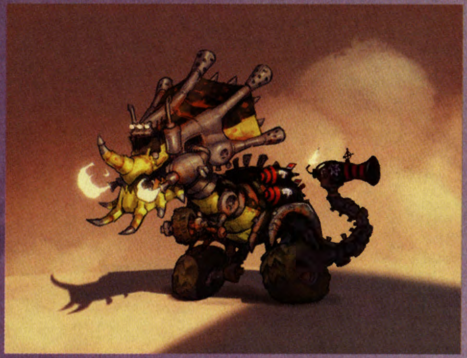

DARKNESS.
WORKS
EVERYTIME!

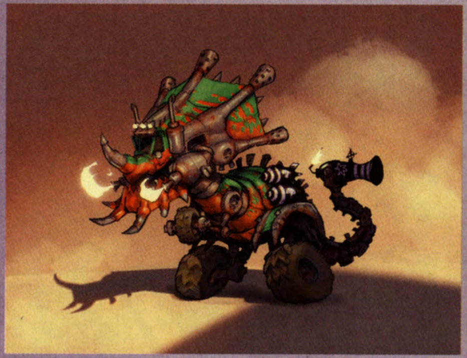


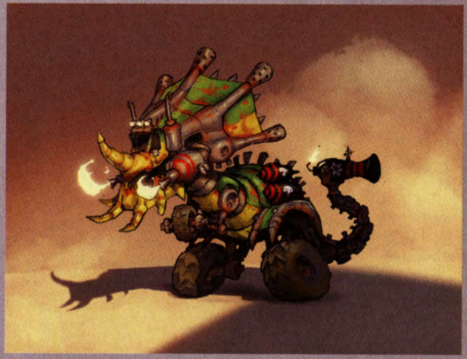


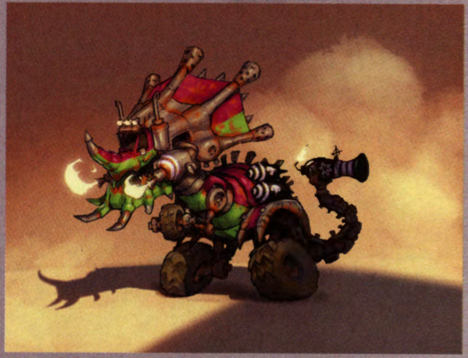


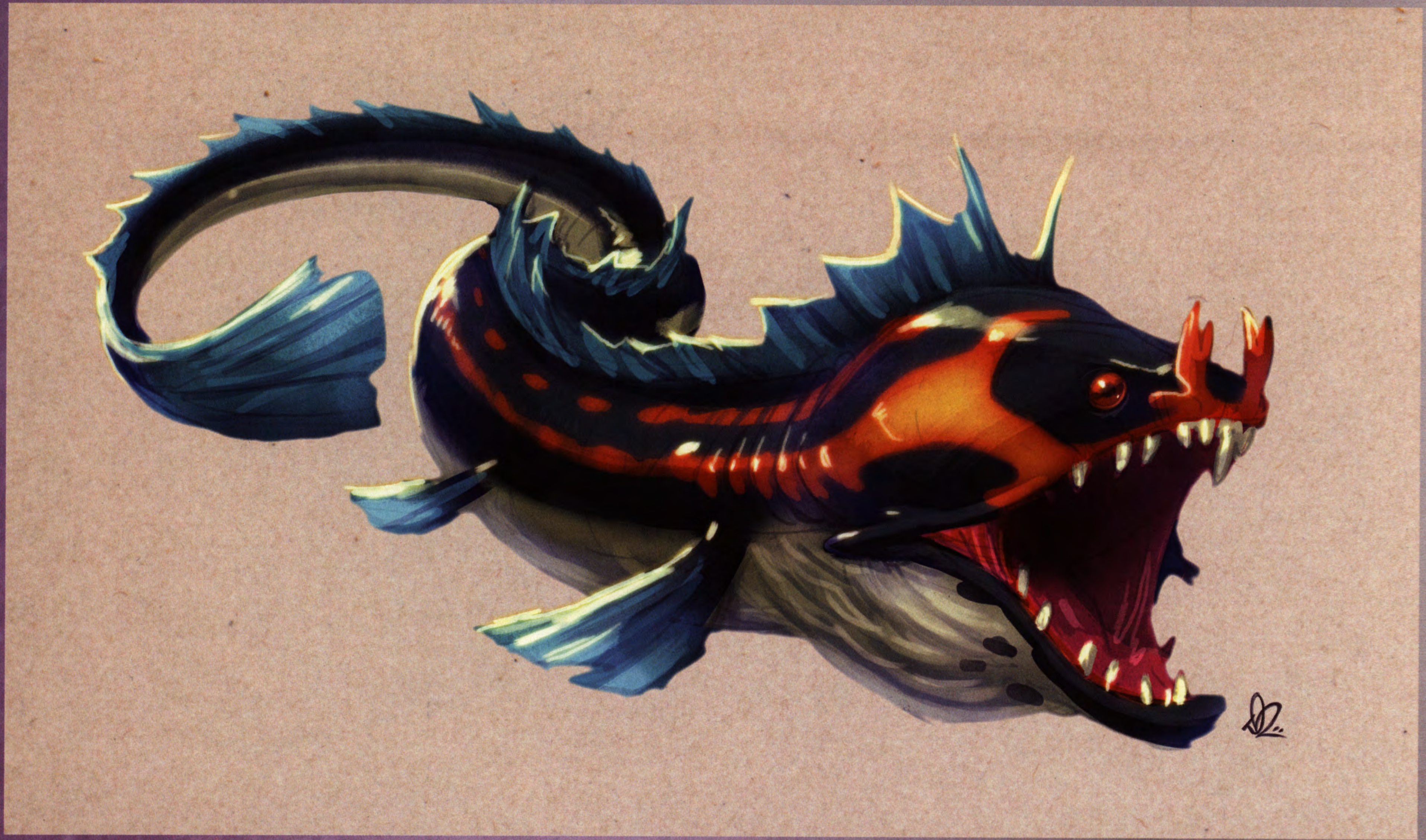


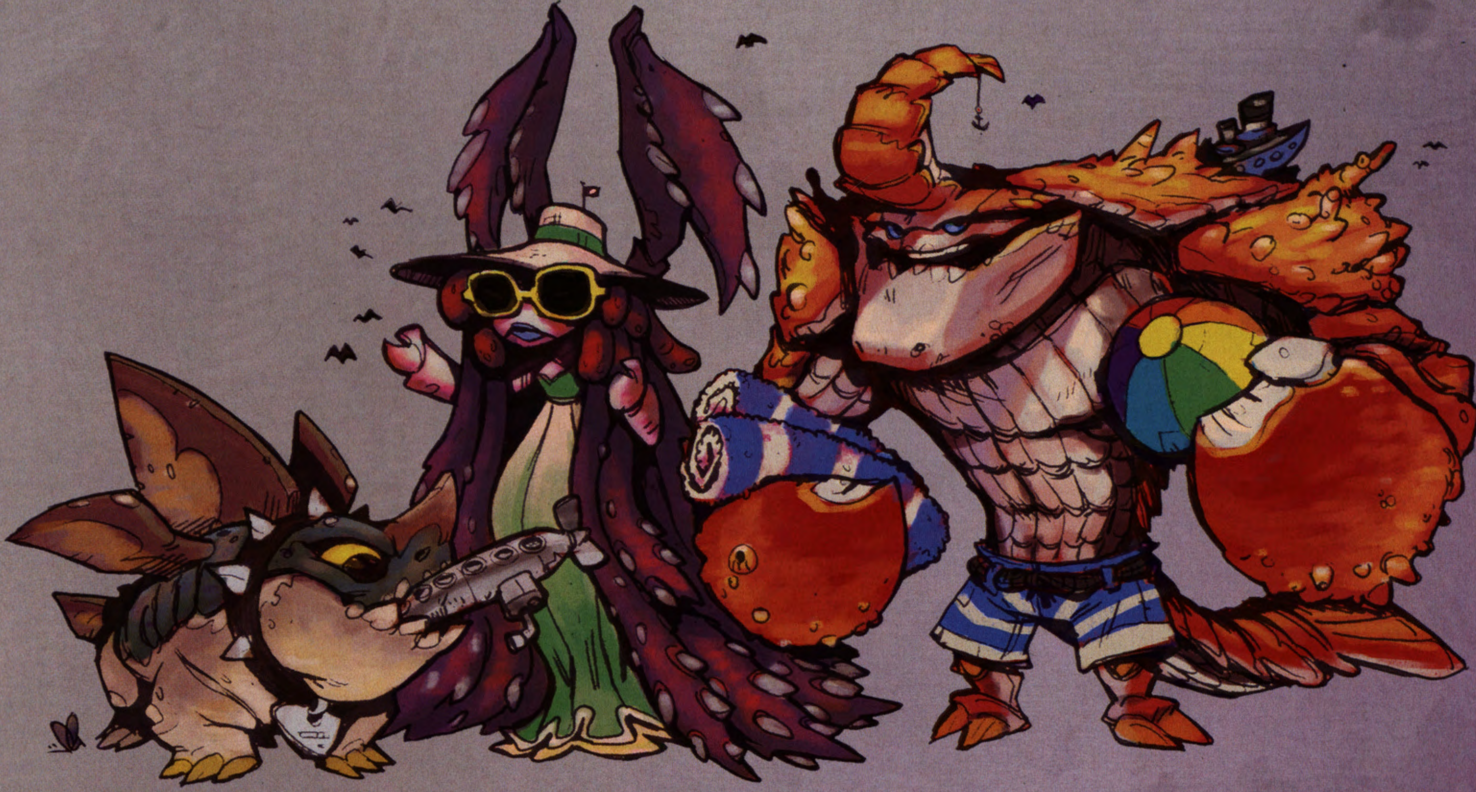


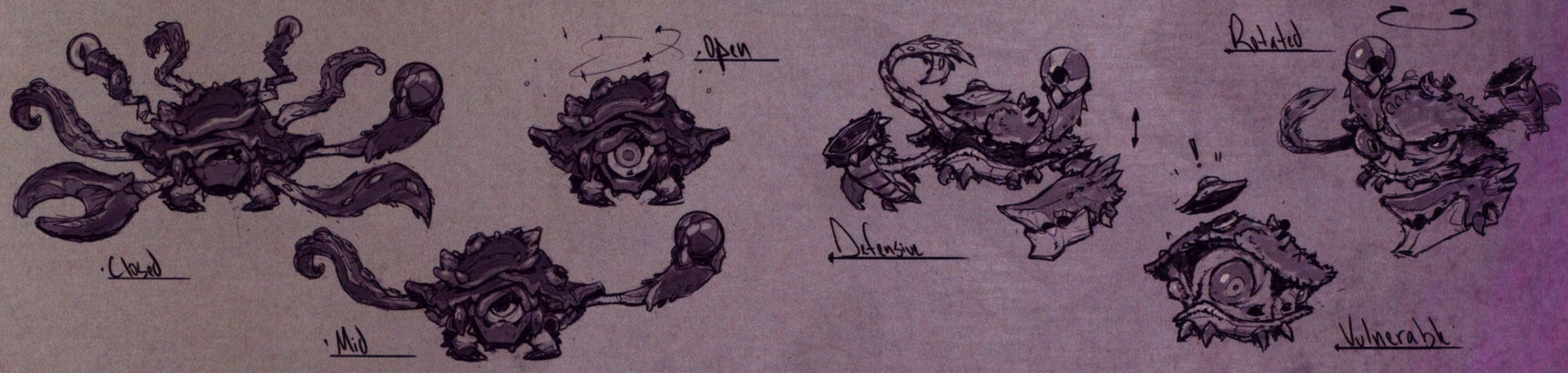


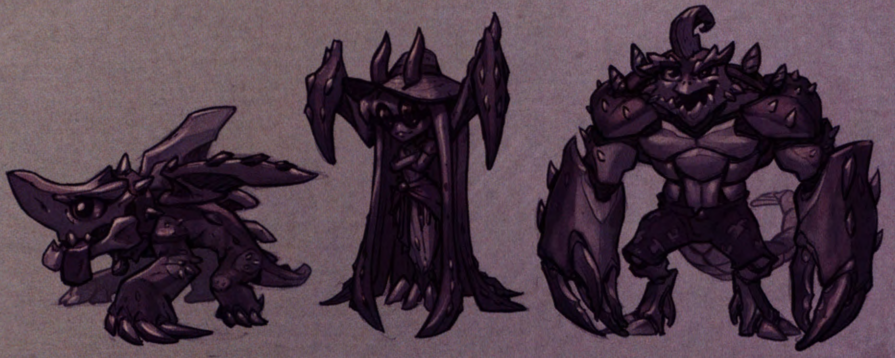


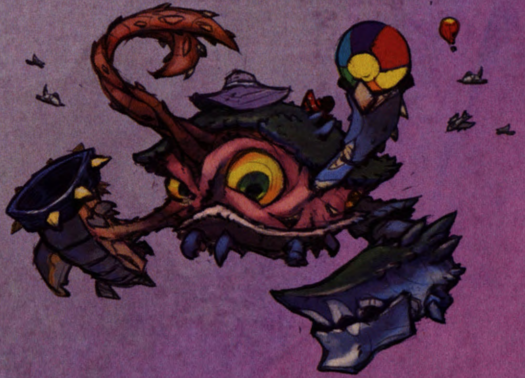


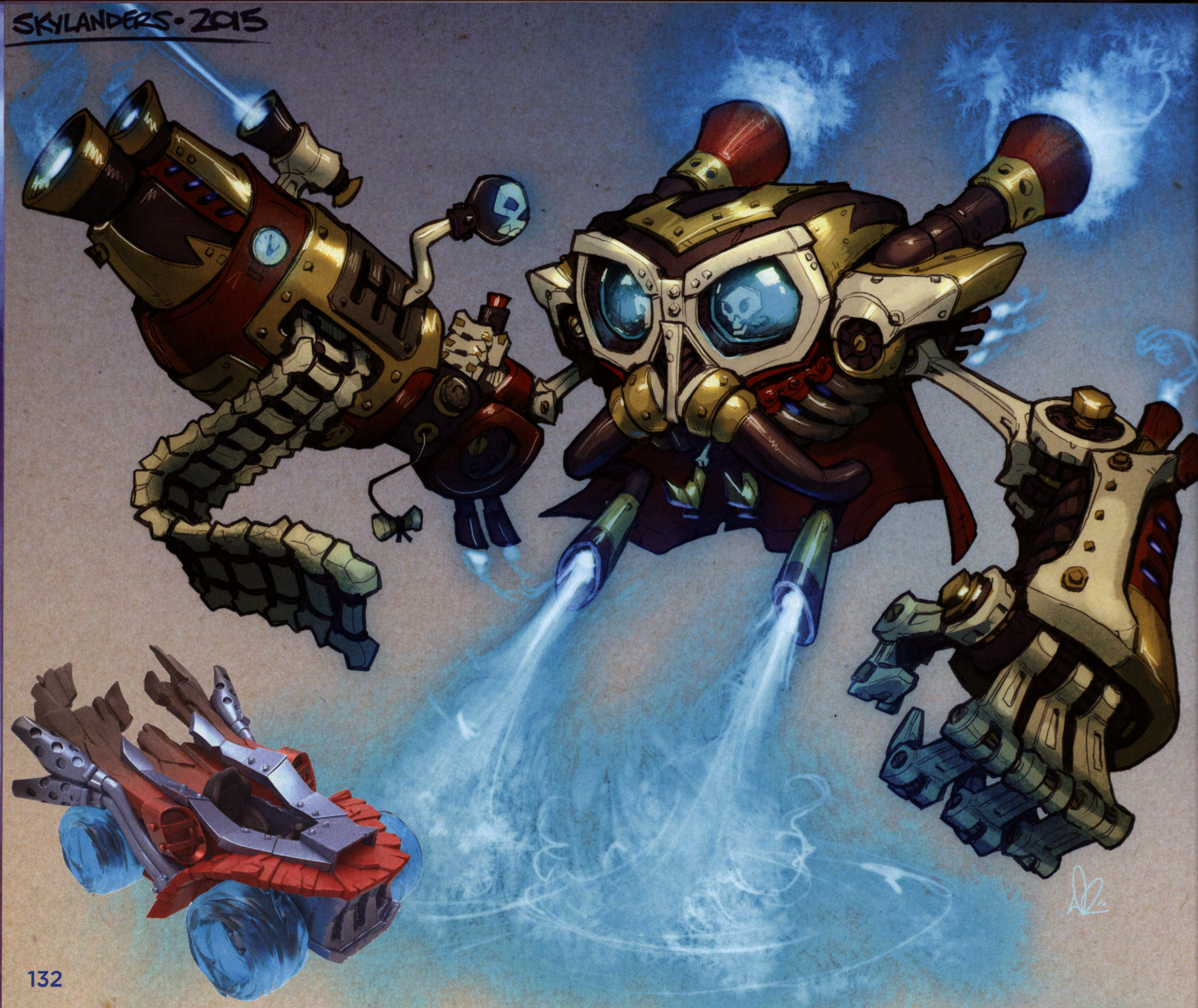





Closed
Open
Mid
Defensive
Rotated
Vulnerable

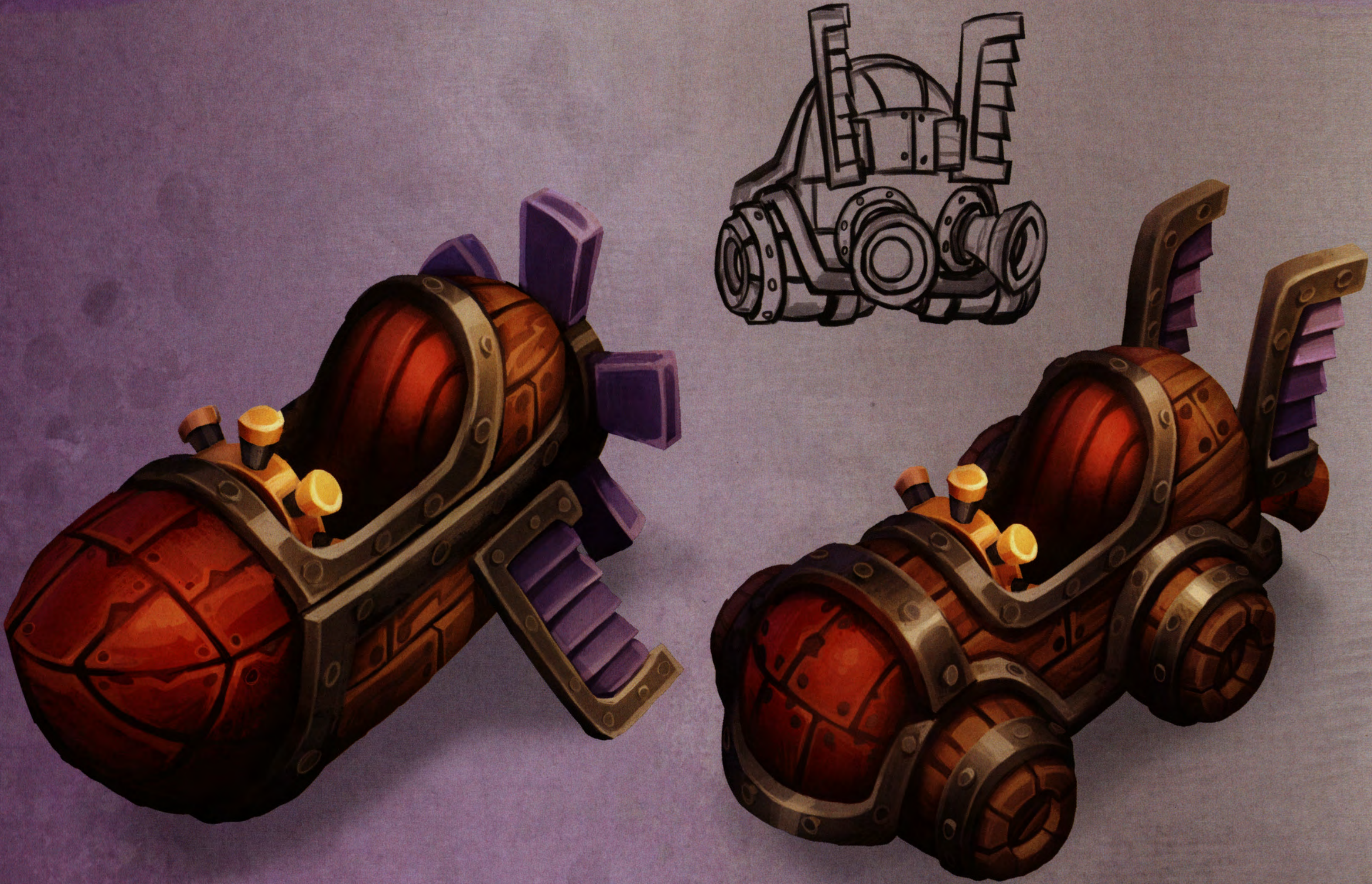


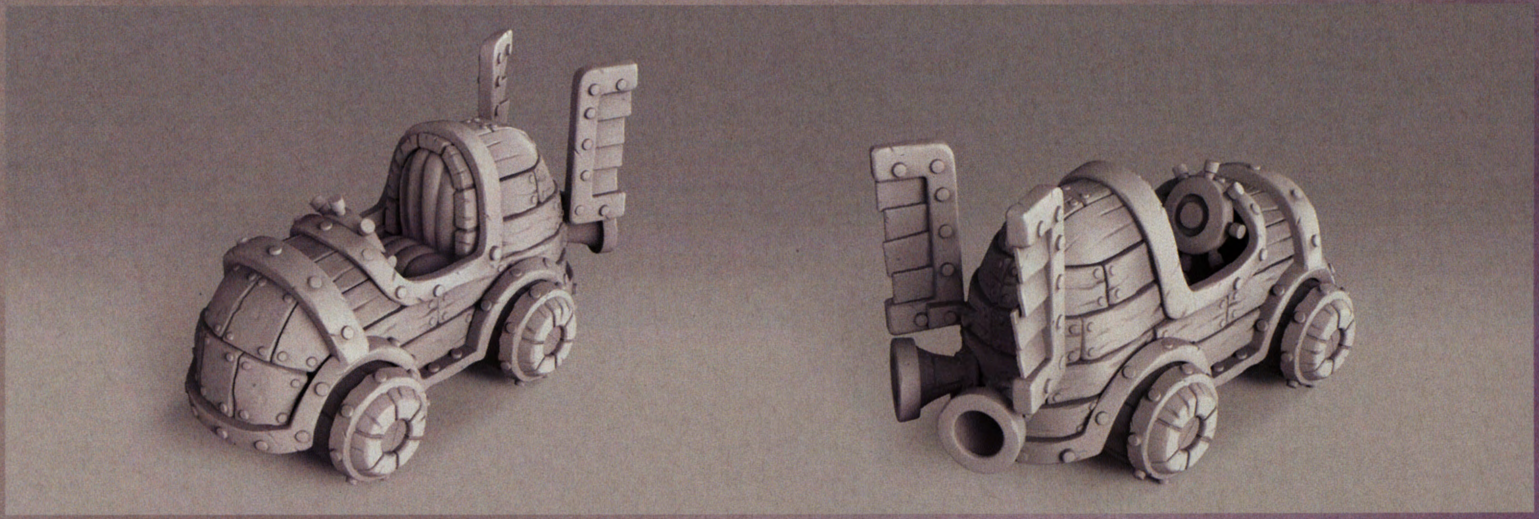


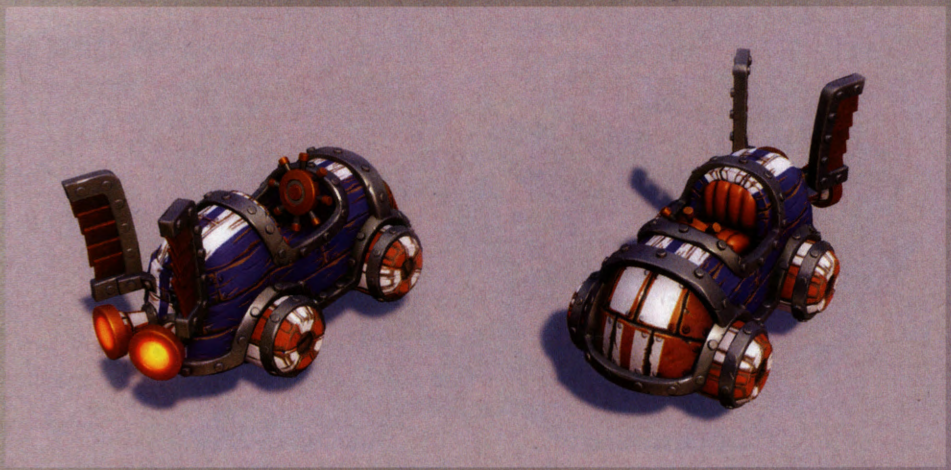

SKYLANDERS • 2015

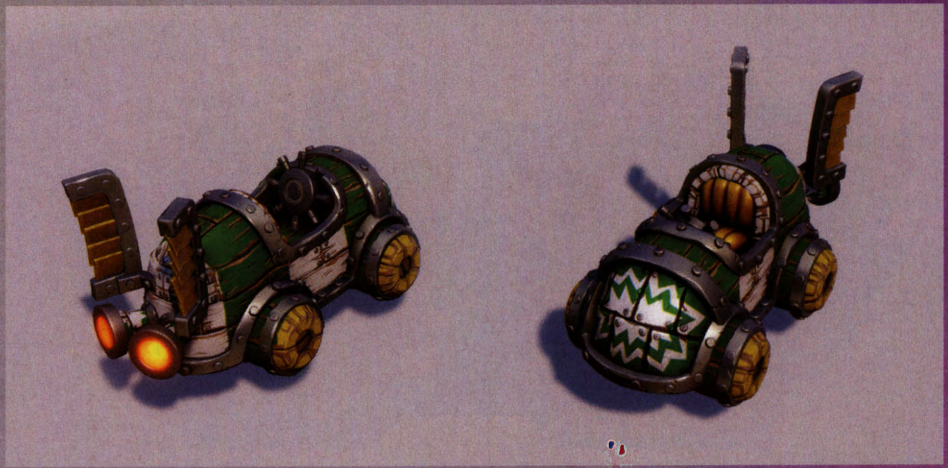
Super Man

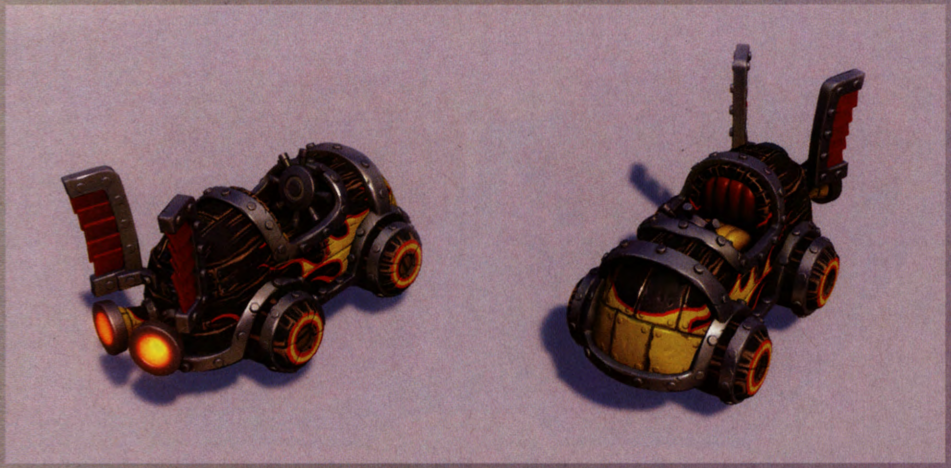
RACE PACKS

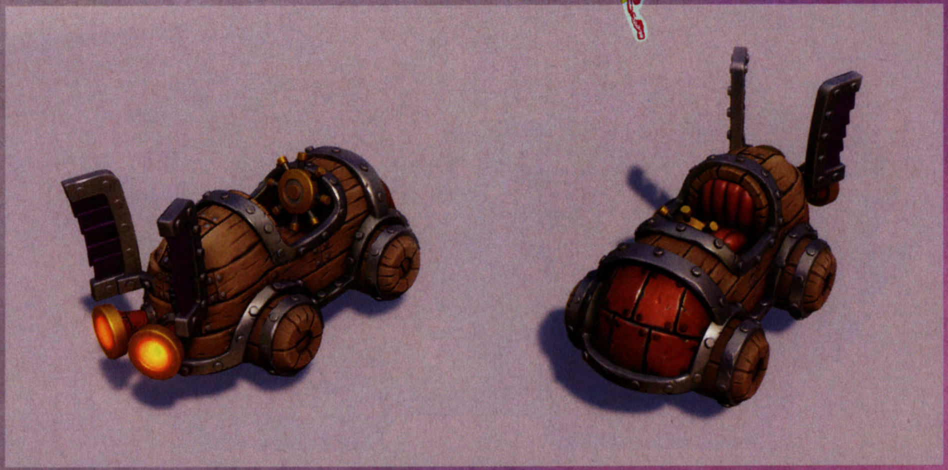


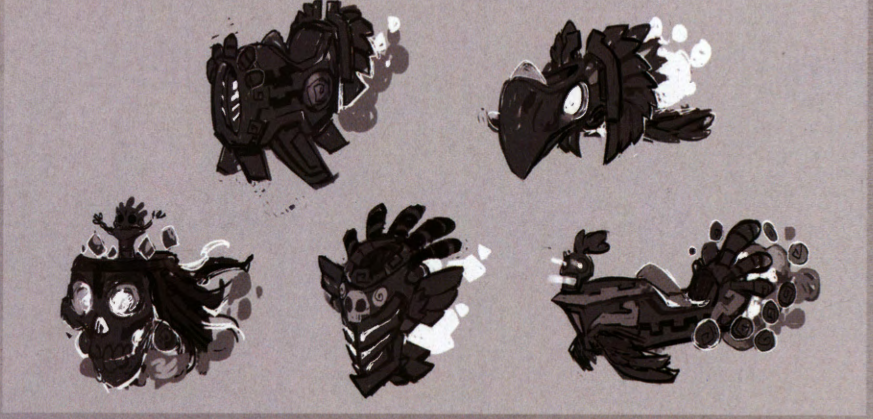


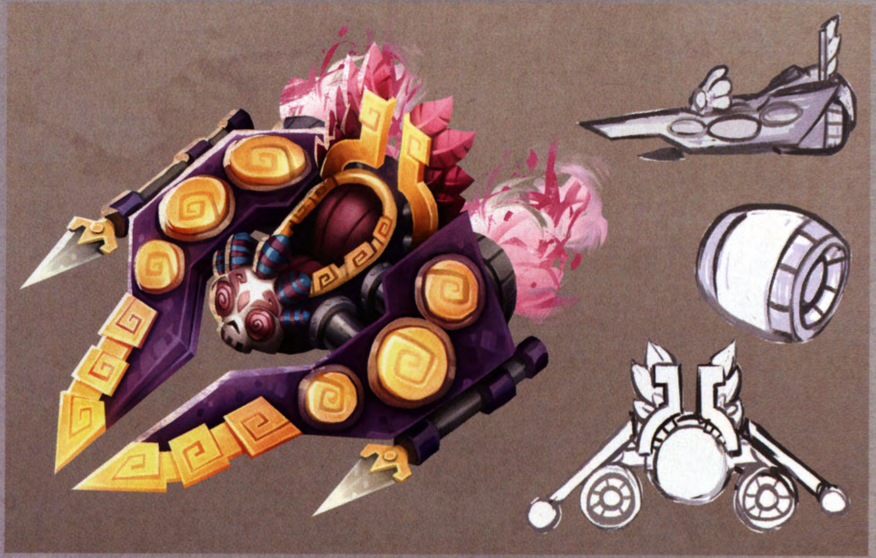


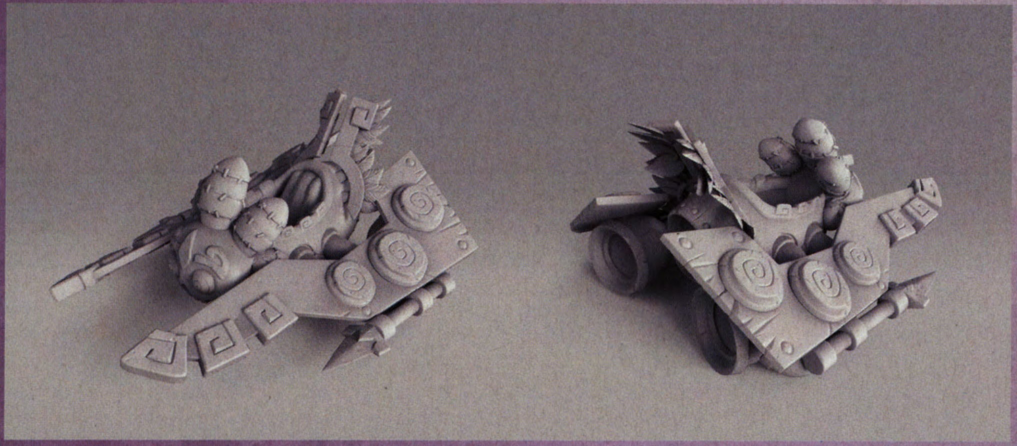


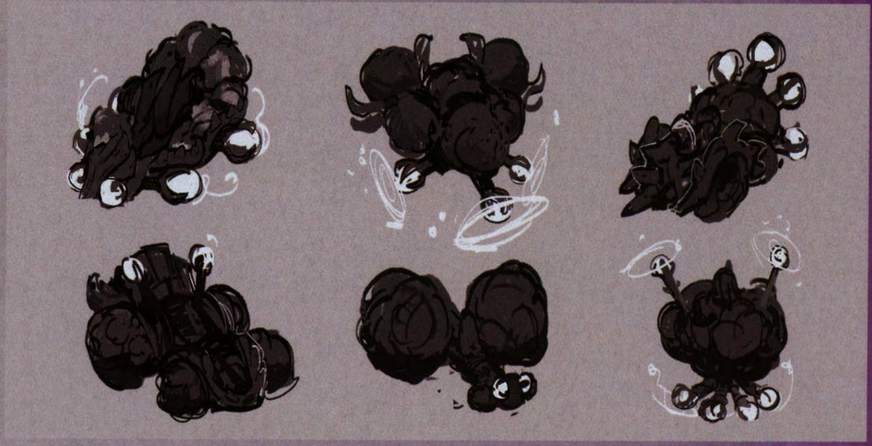


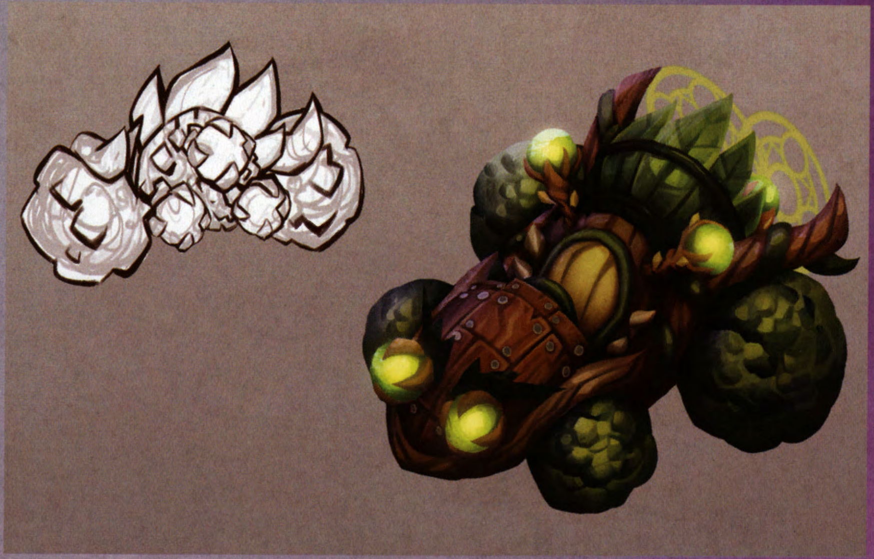


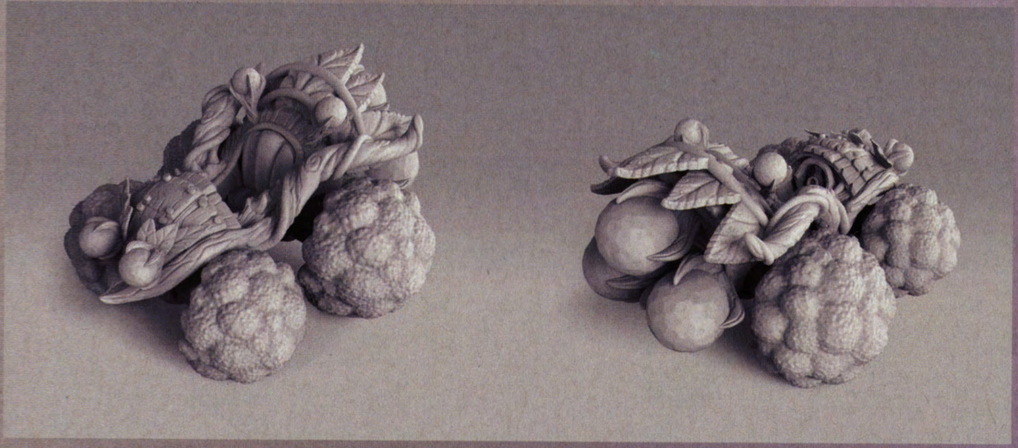


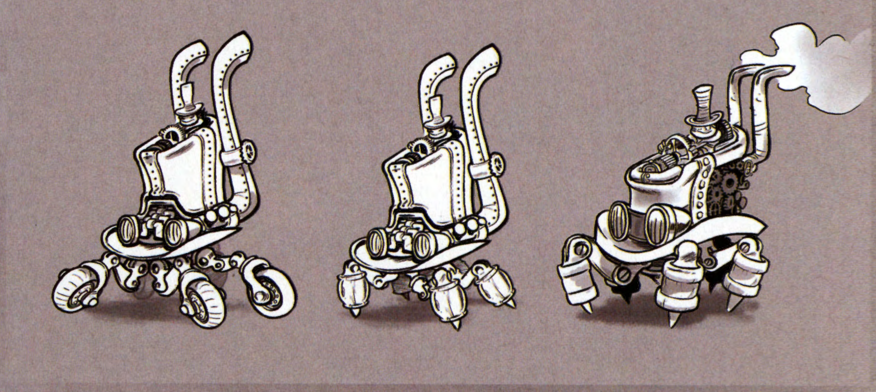


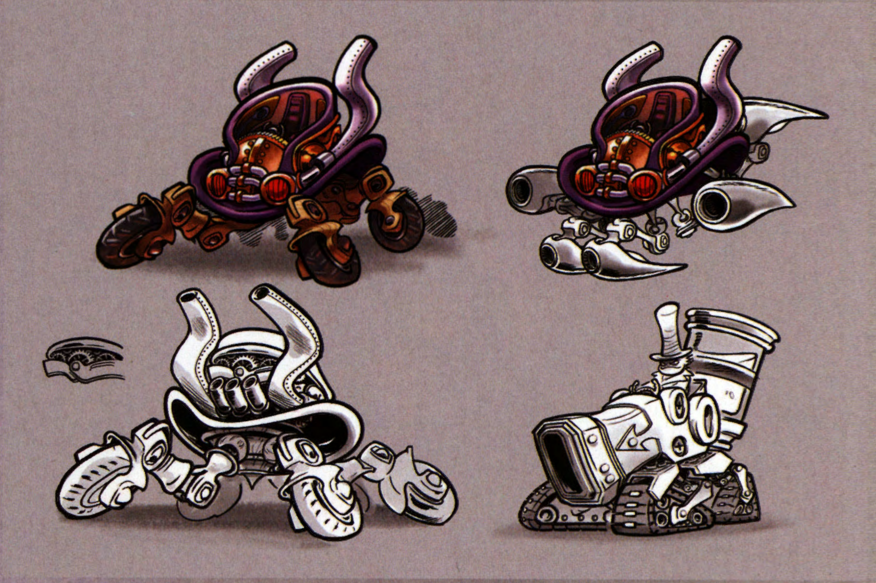


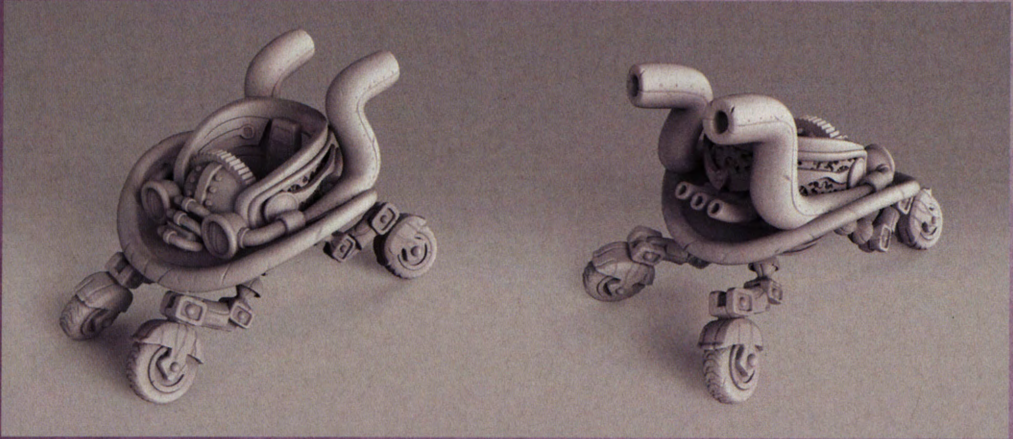


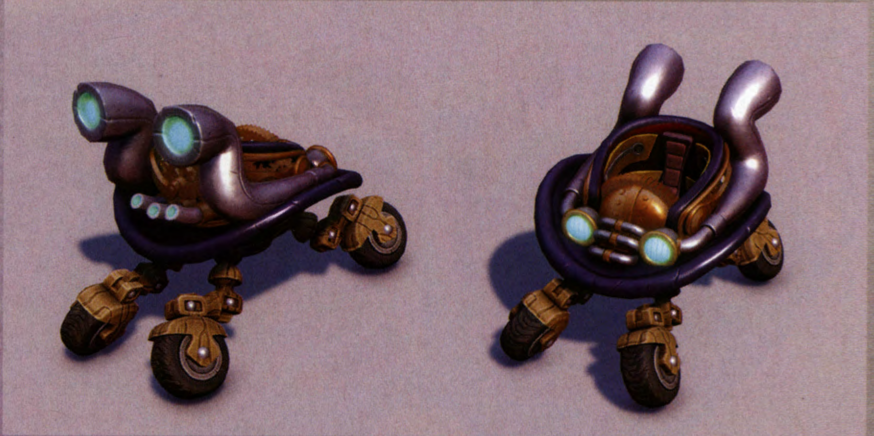


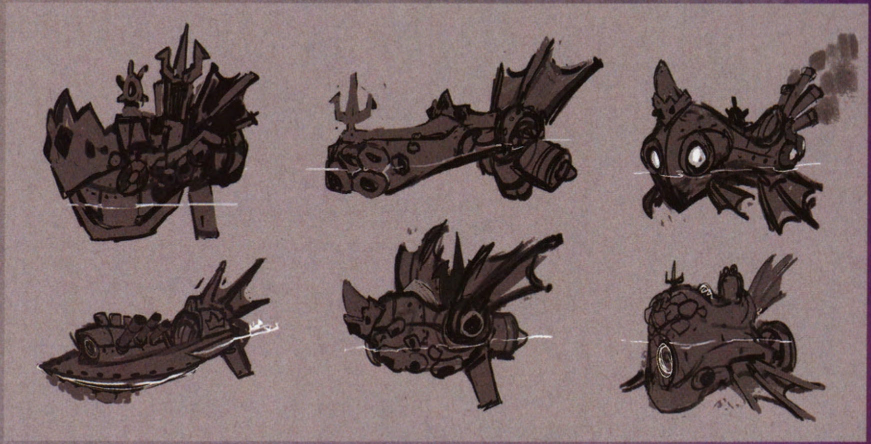


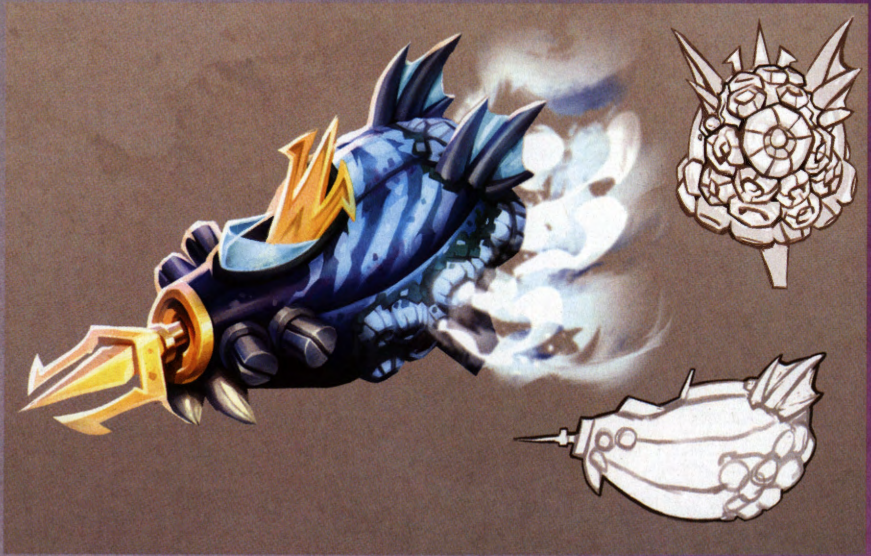


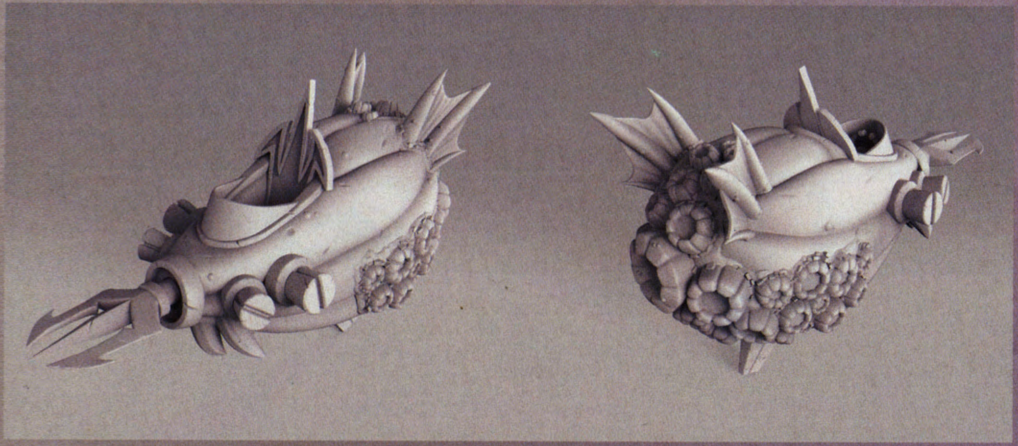


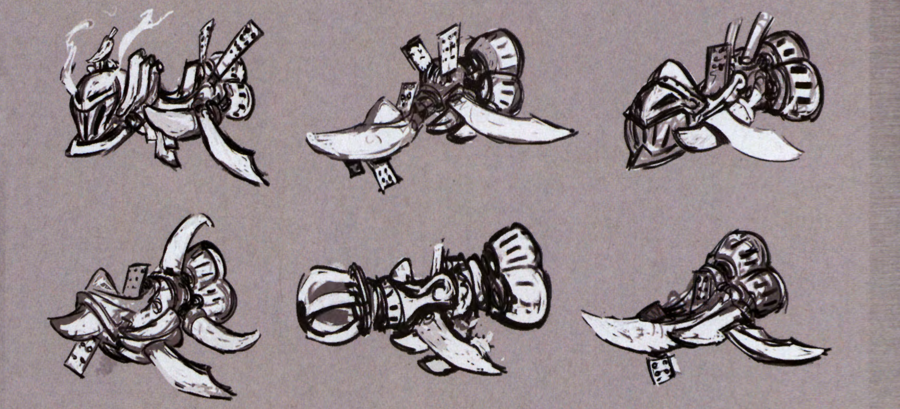


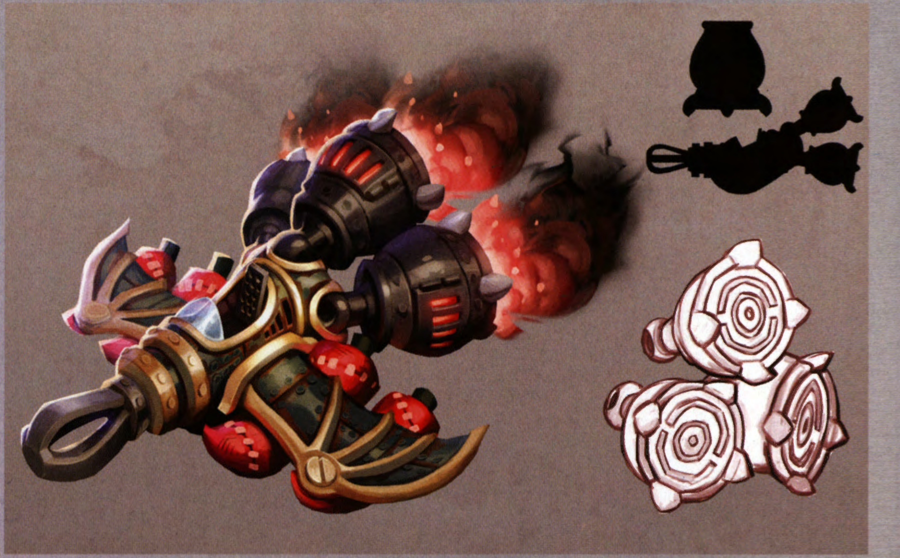


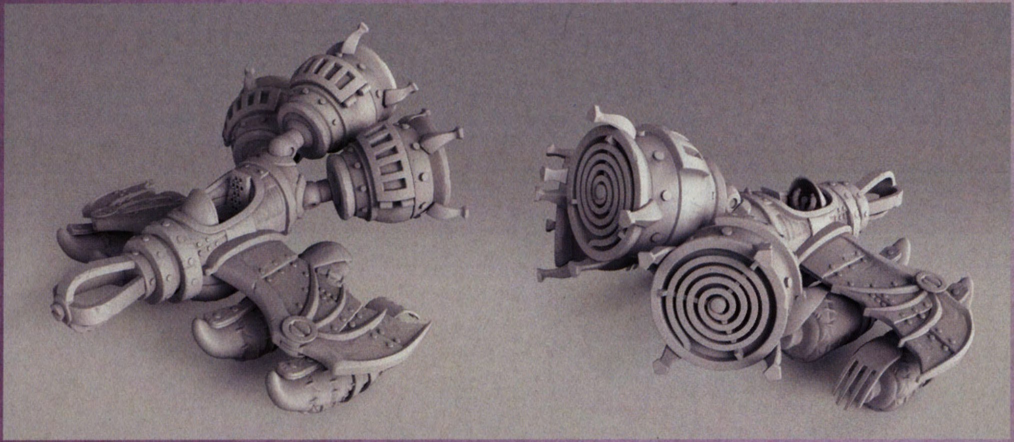


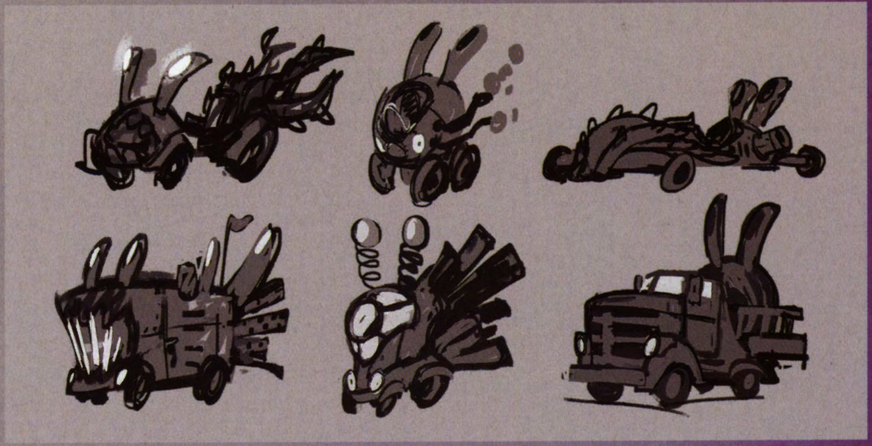


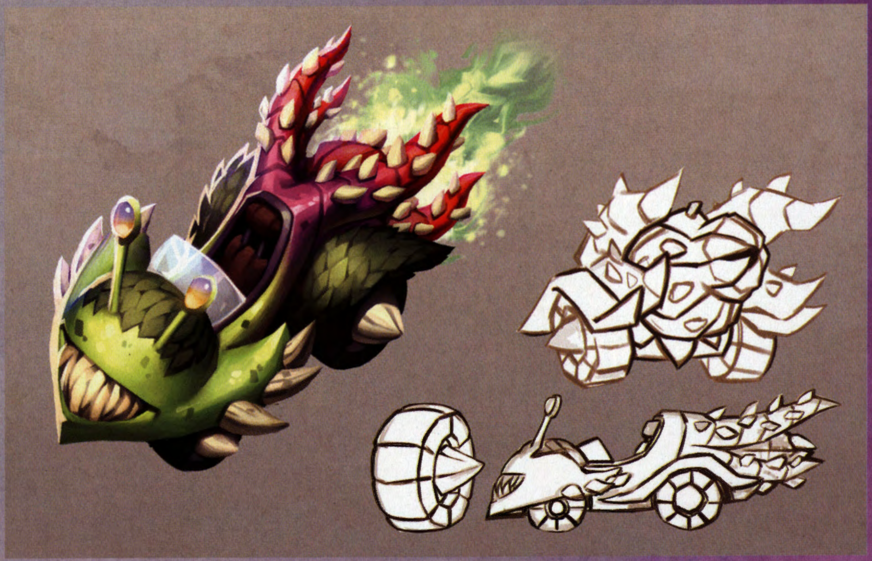


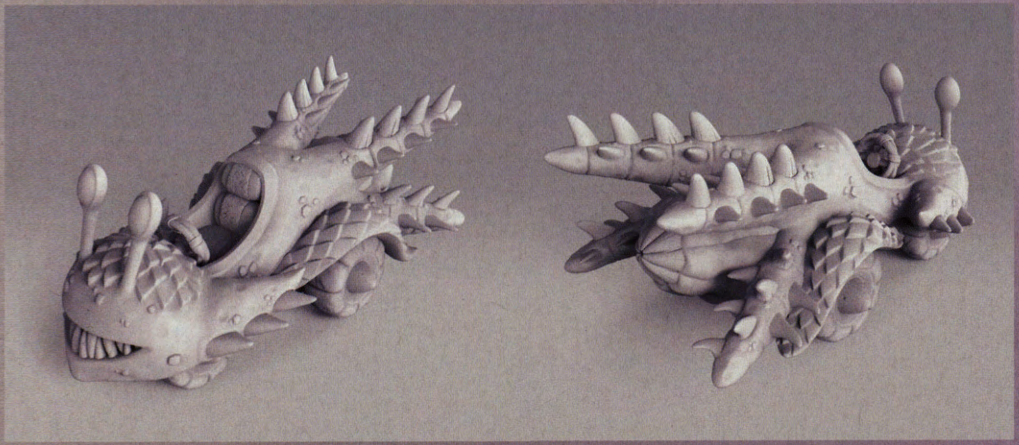


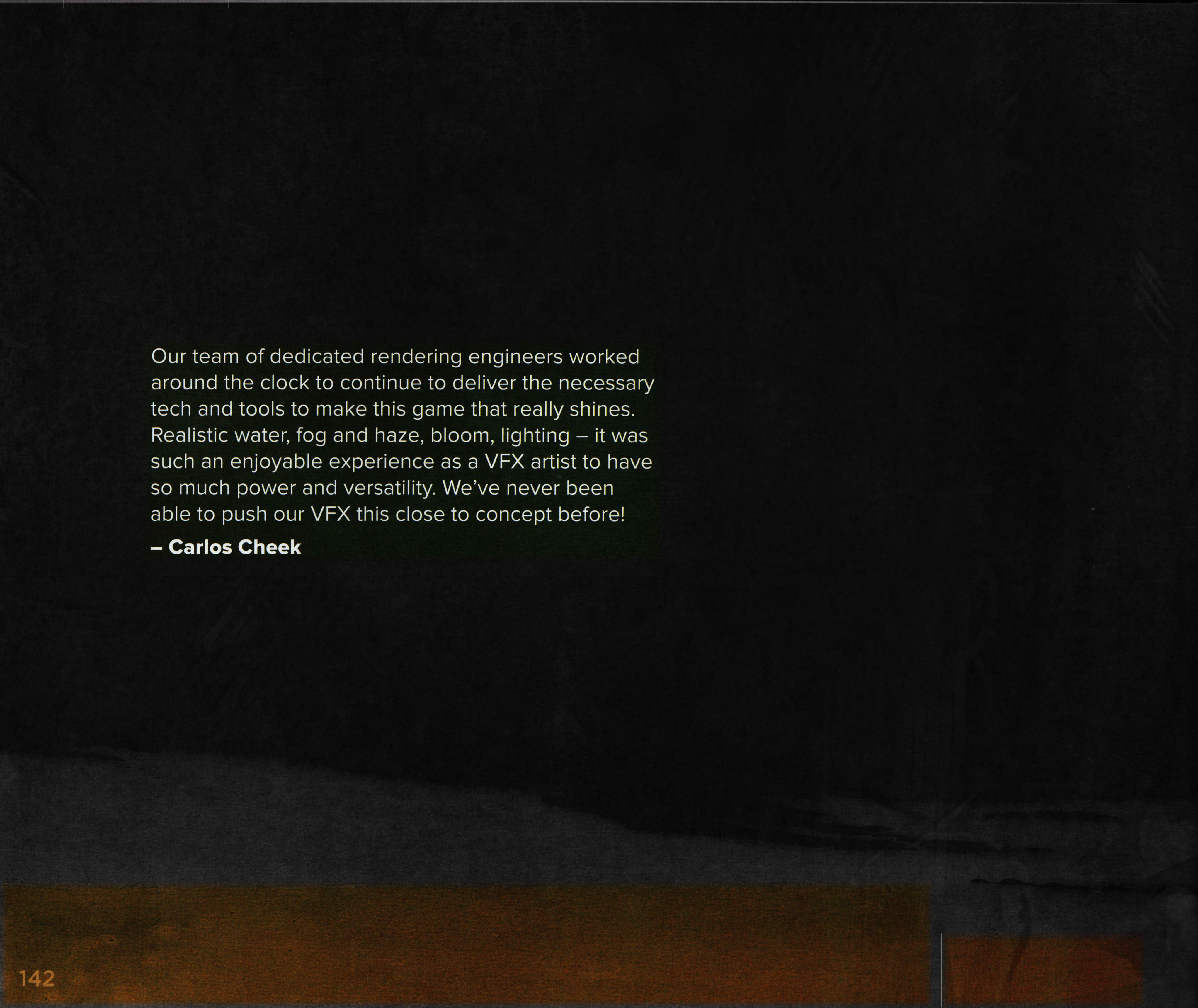








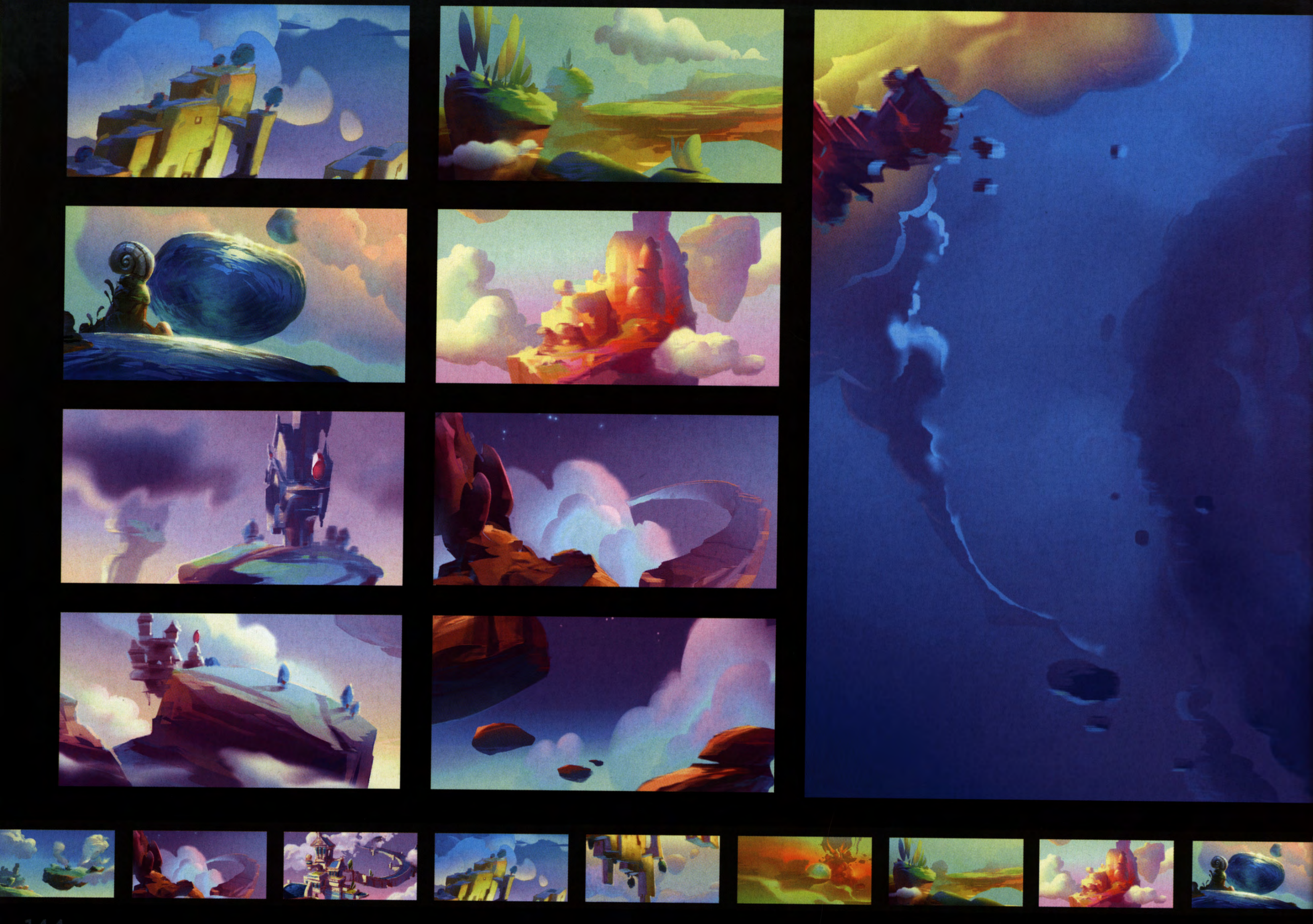


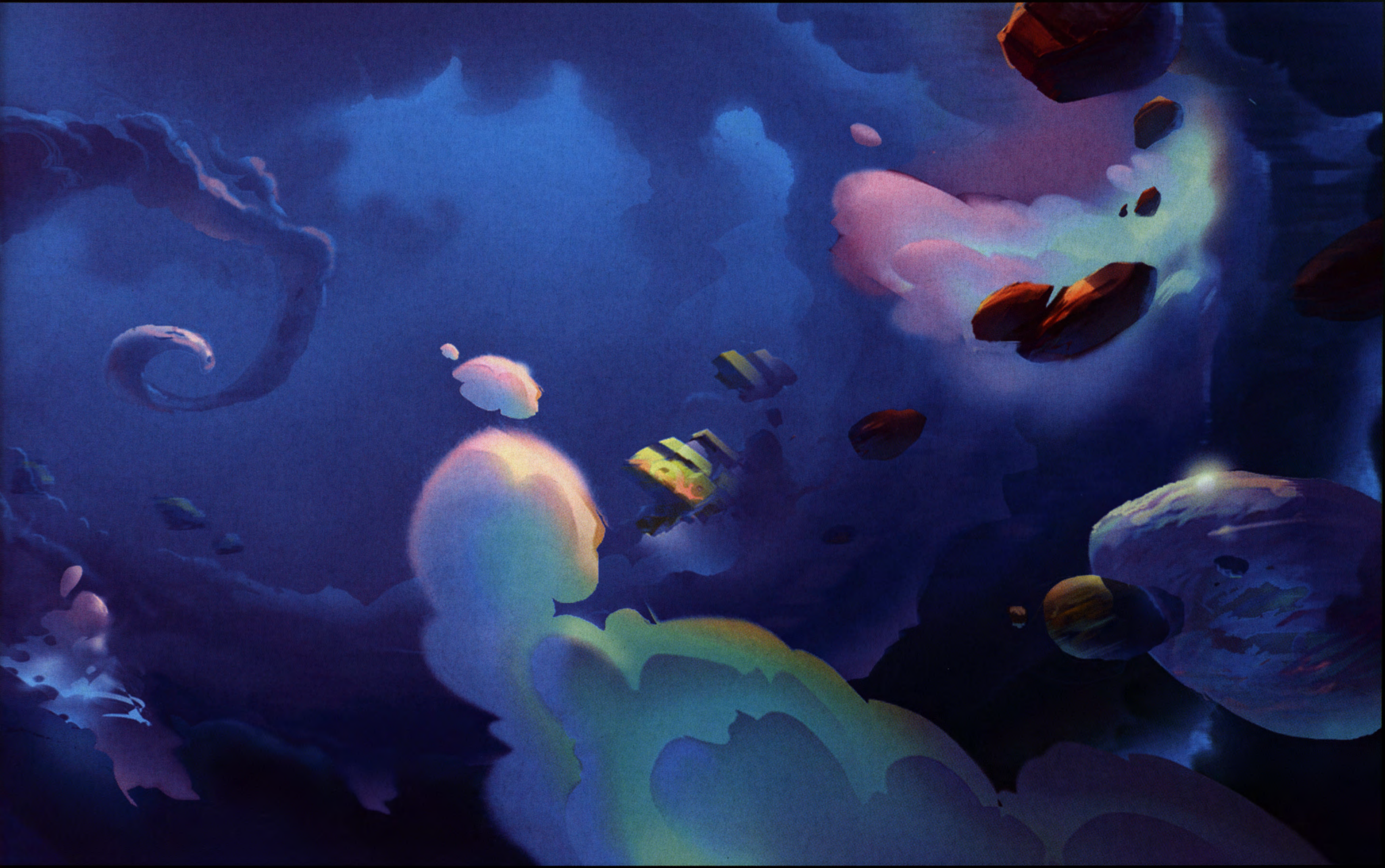


> Our team of dedicated rendering engineers worked around the clock to continue to deliver the necessary tech and tools to make this game that really shines. Realistic water, fog and haze, bloom, lighting – it was such an enjoyable experience as a VFX artist to have so much power and versatility. We've never been able to push our VFX this close to concept before!
>
> **– Carlos Cheek**

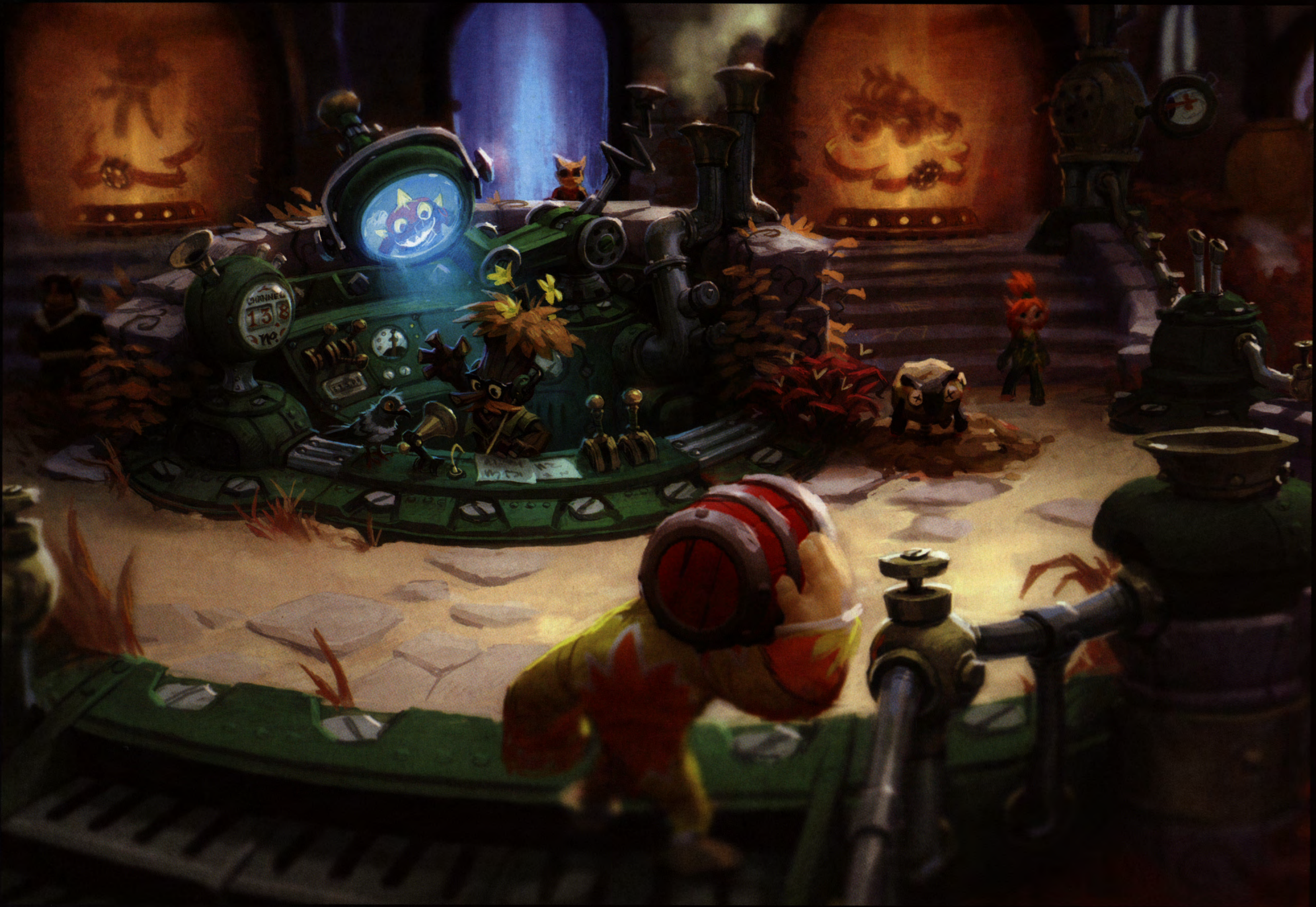
ENVISION A WORLD

COLOR SCRIPT





SKYLANDER ACADEMY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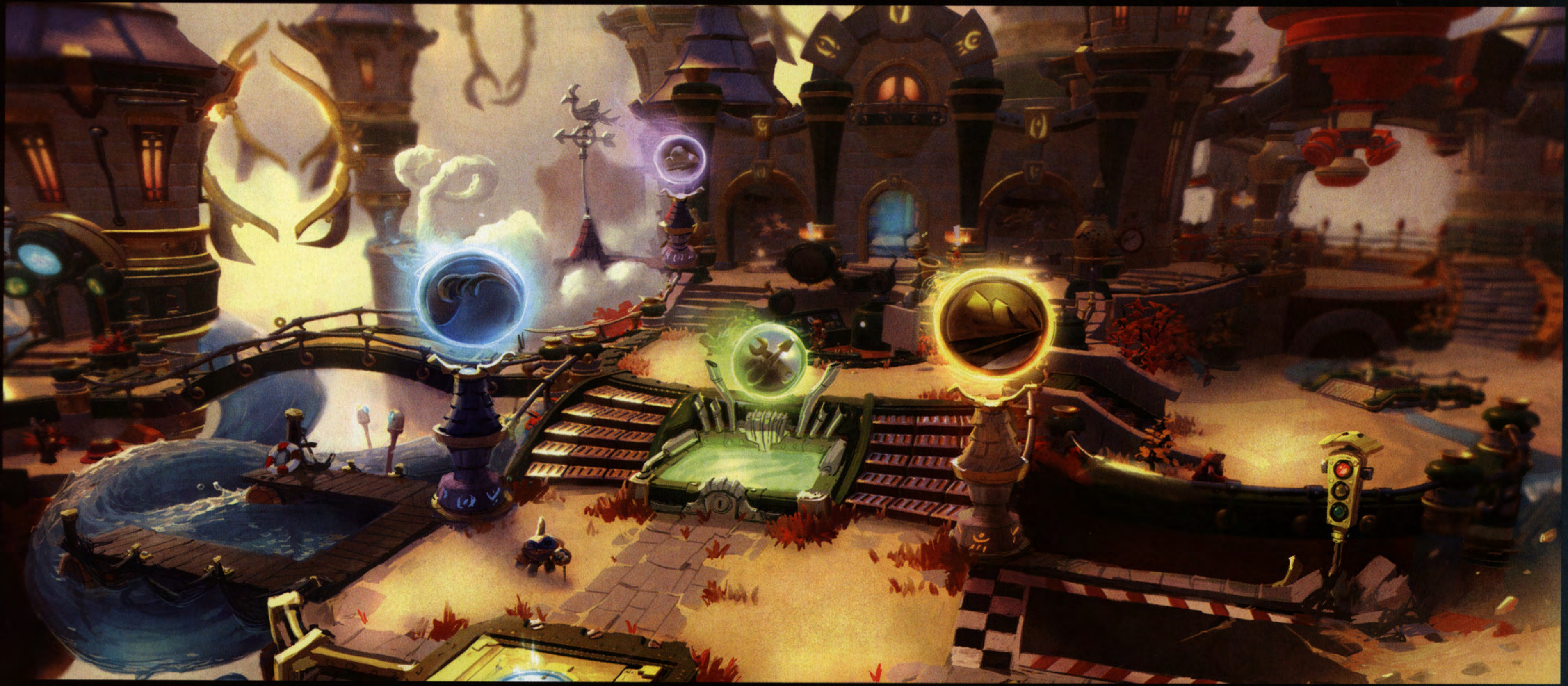
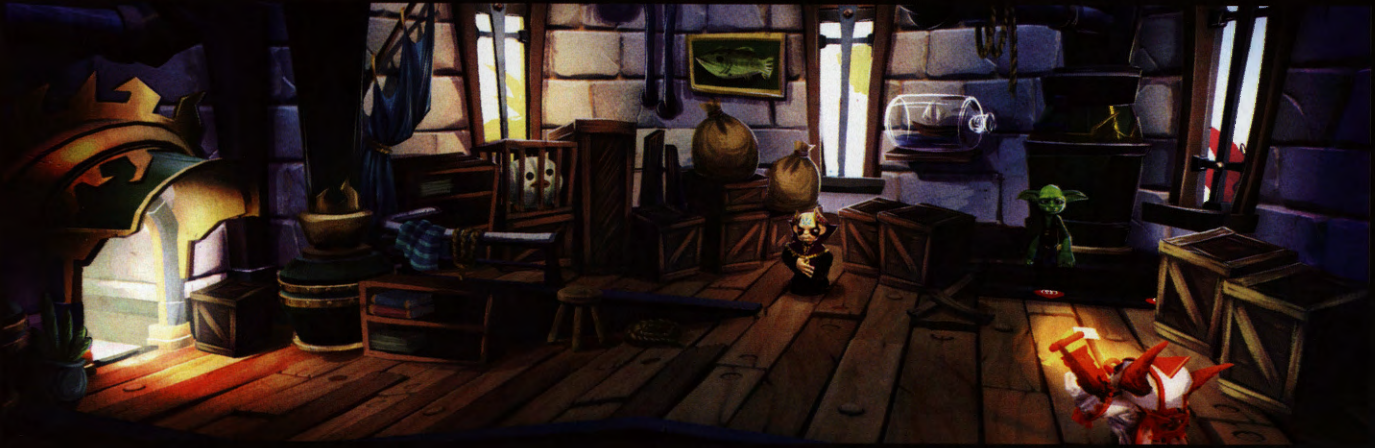
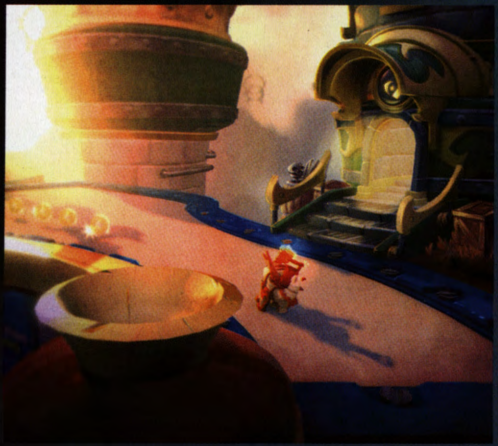
No.

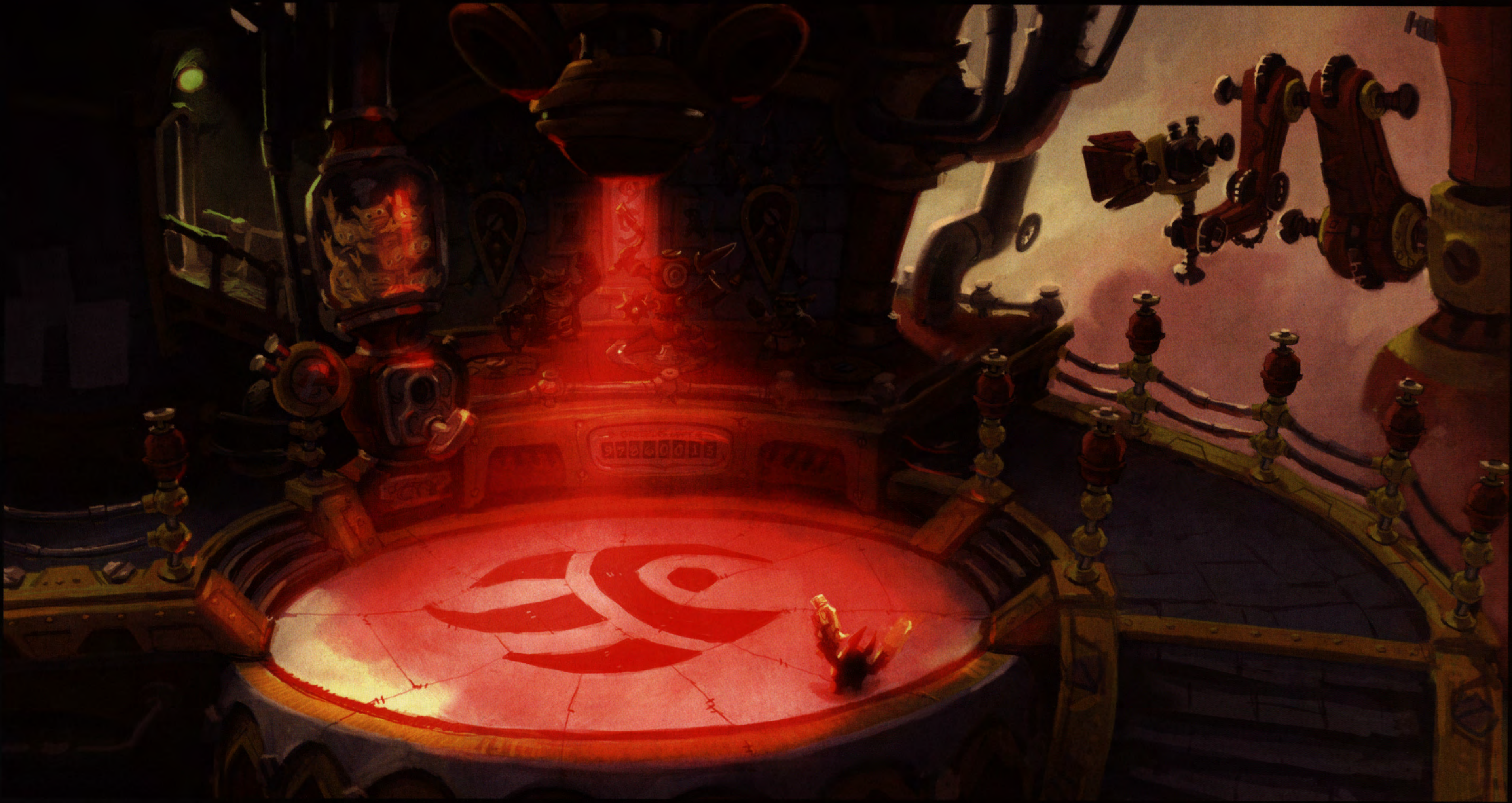
The Academy is the last hope against Kaos and the Darkness. It is a floating rebel base filled with the best and brightest from across the Skylands.

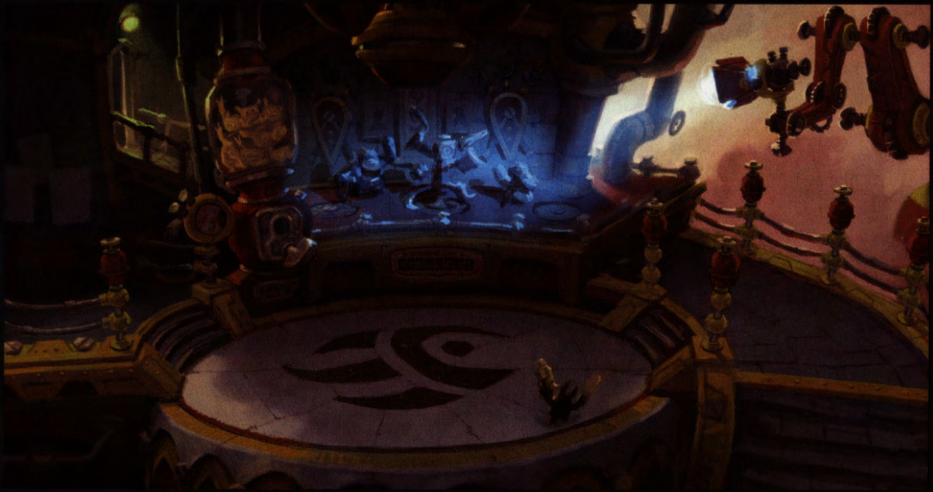
– Devin Knudsen

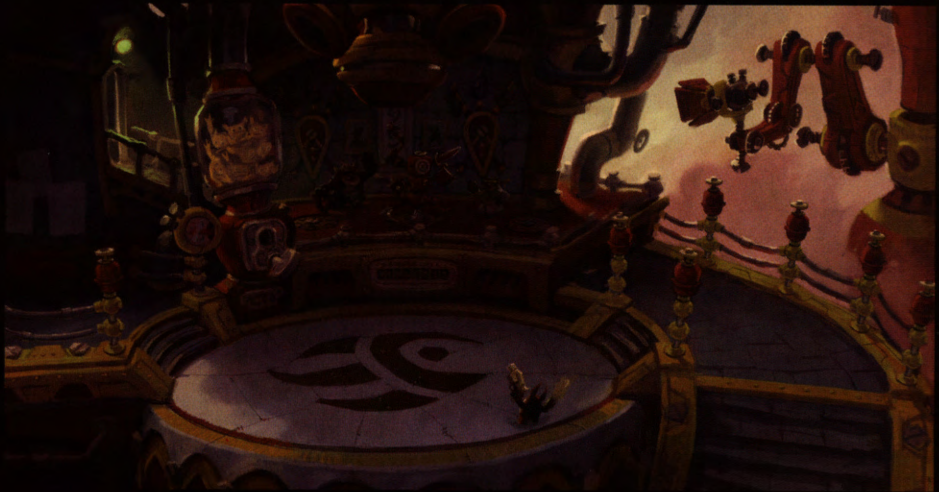


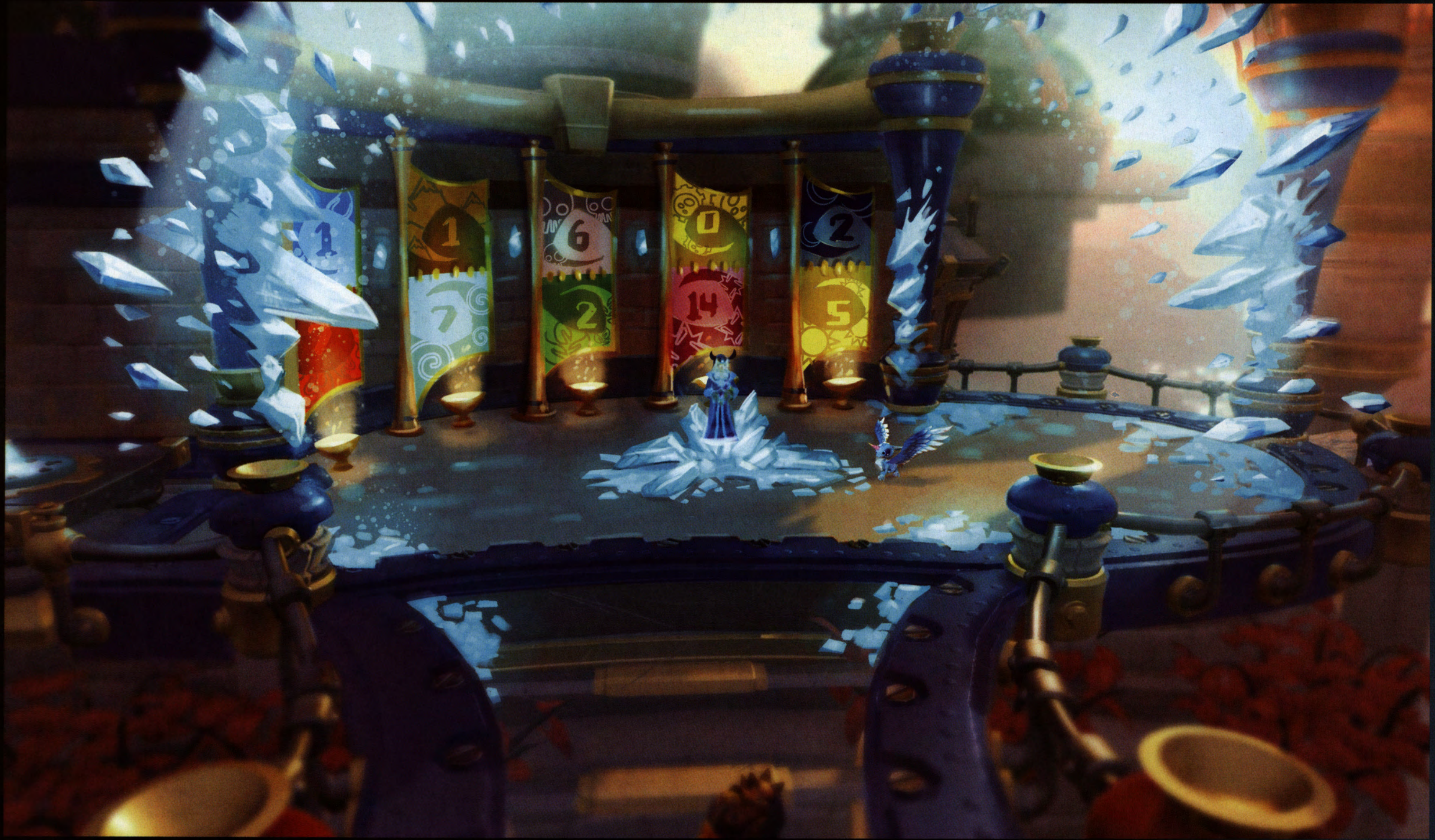








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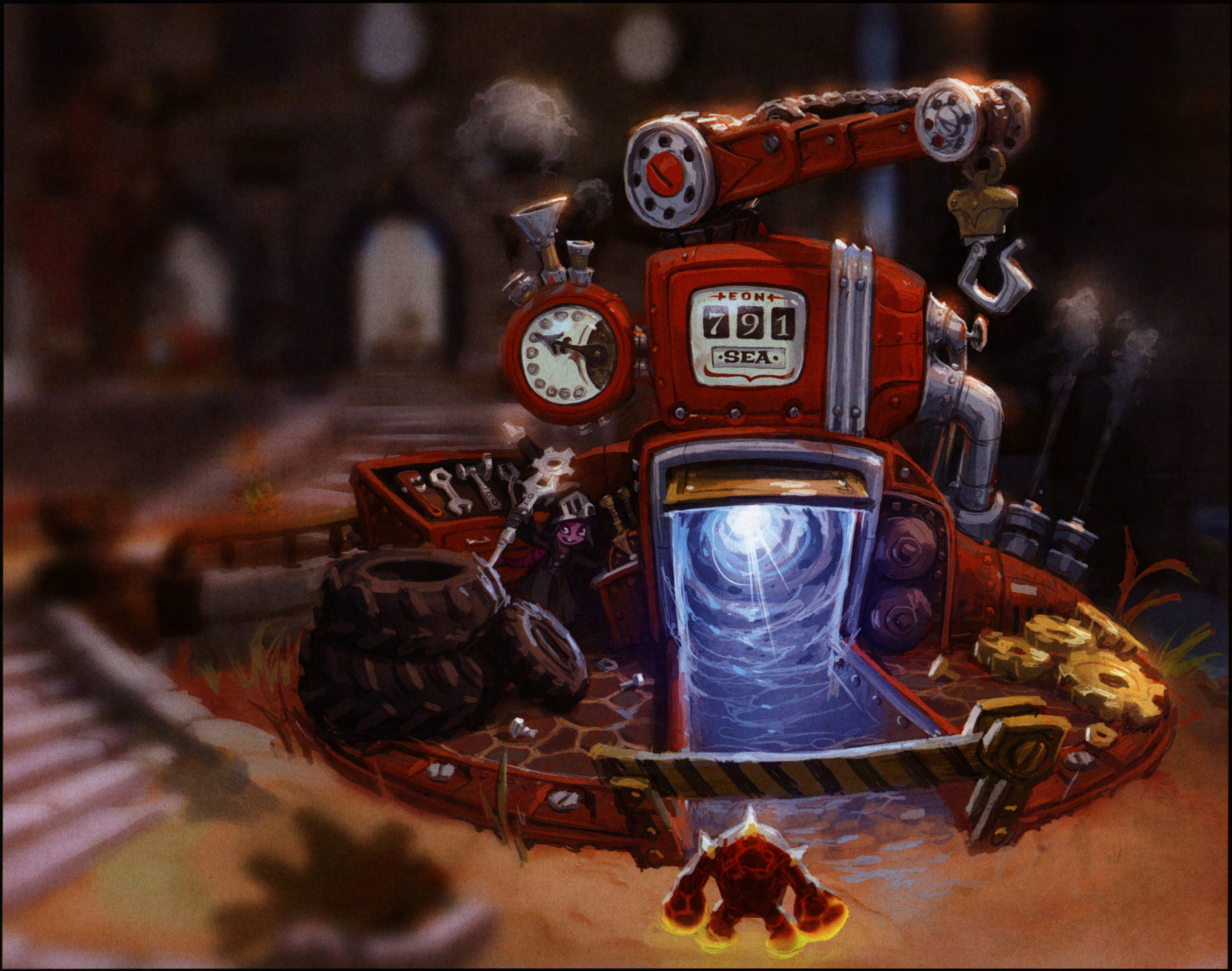
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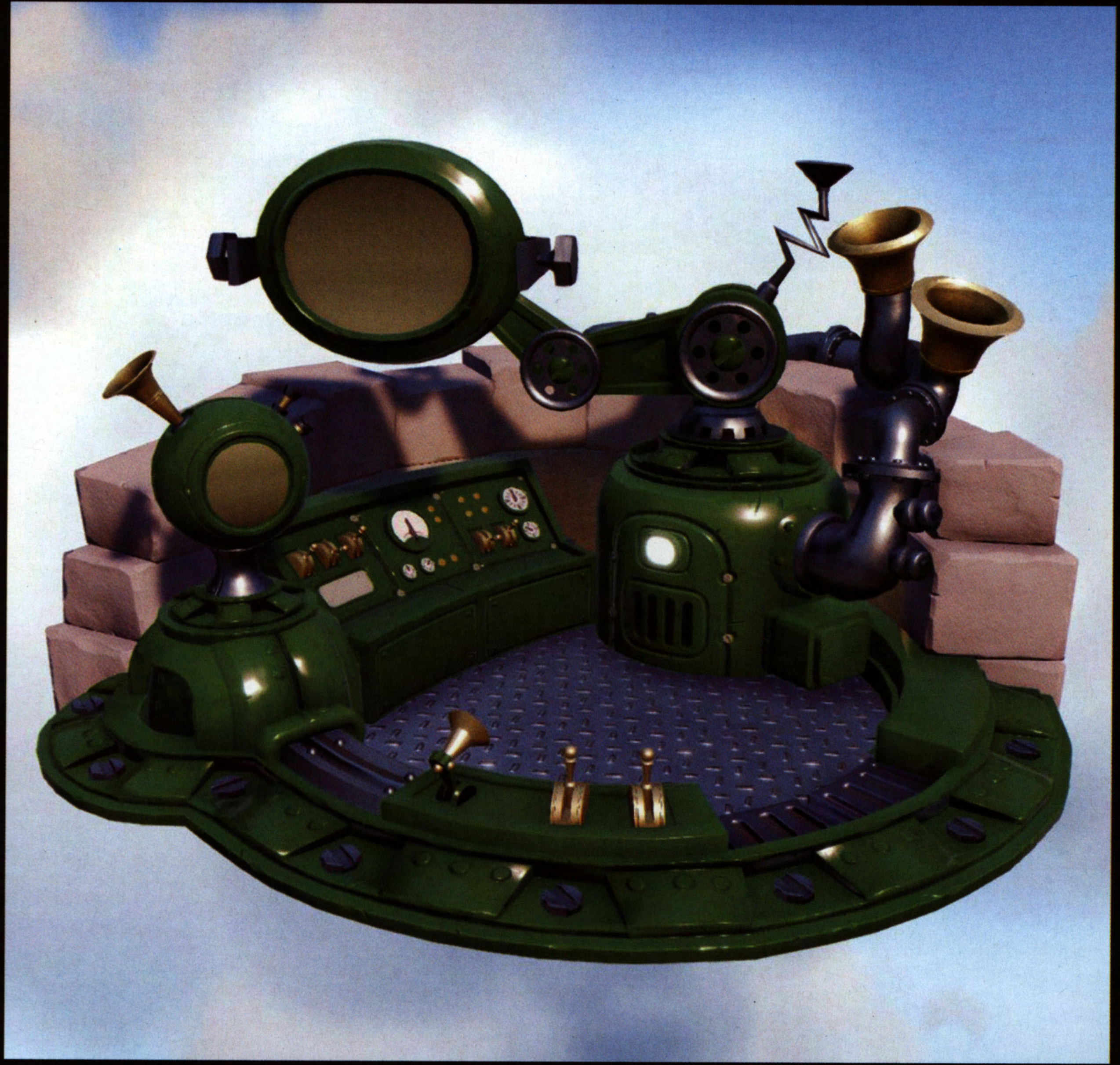
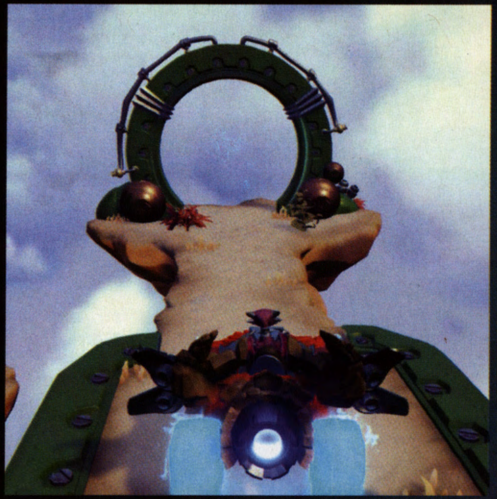
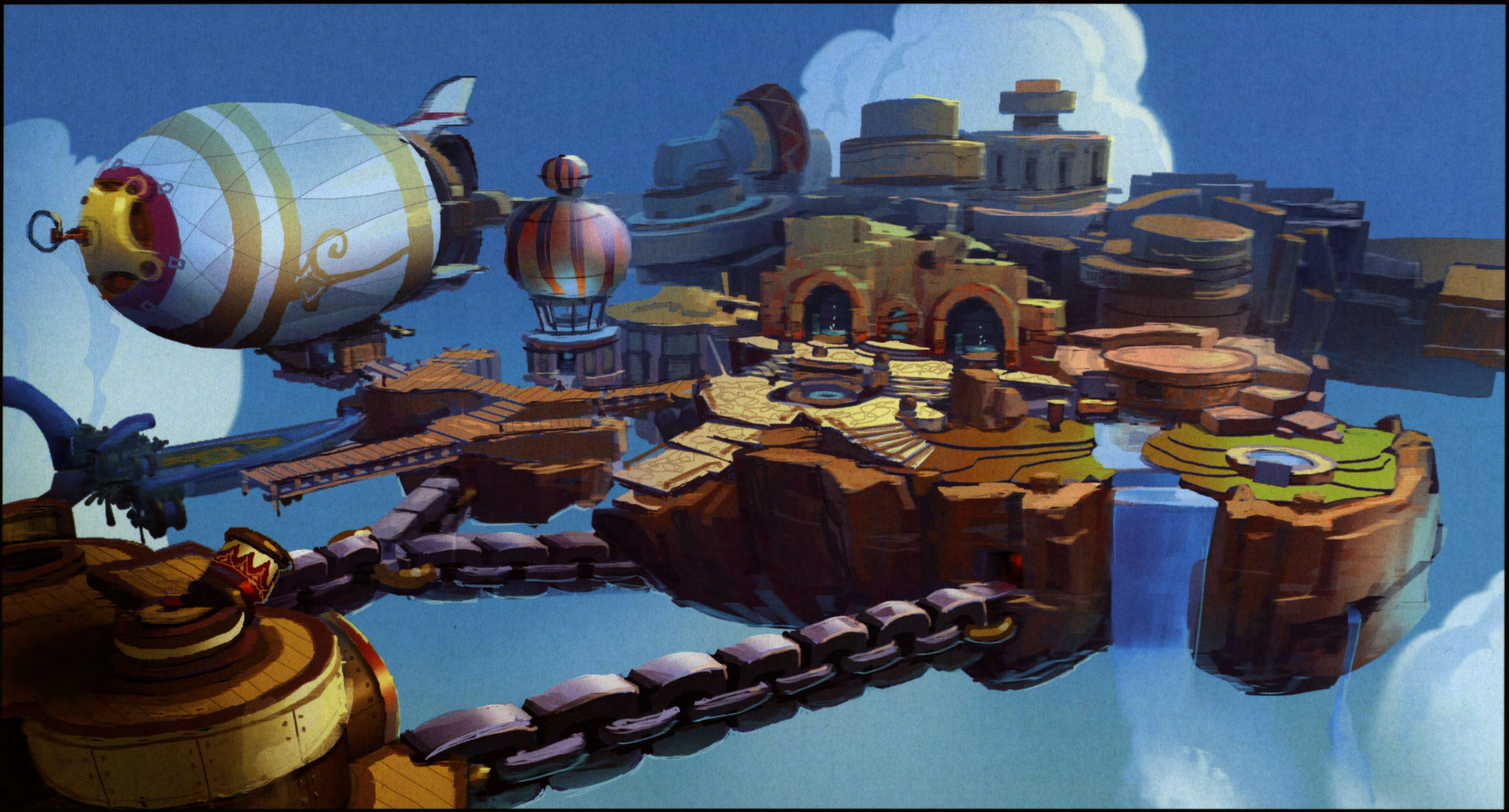
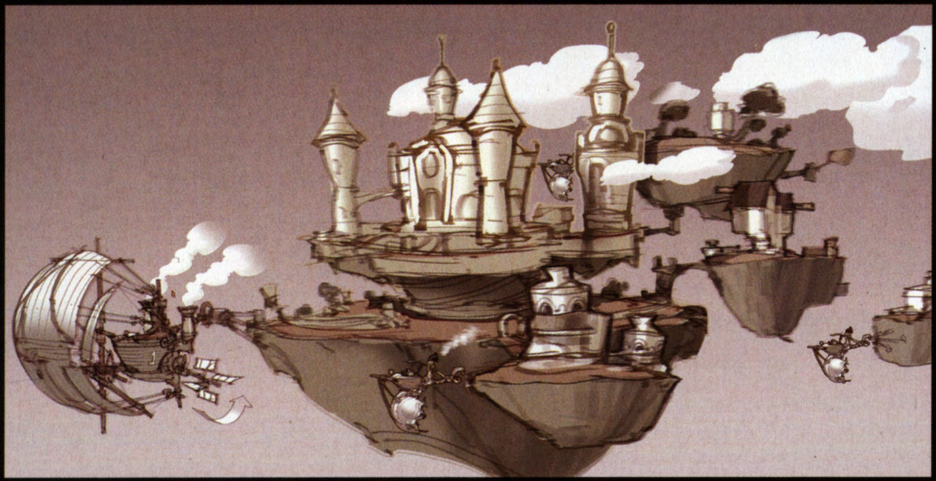
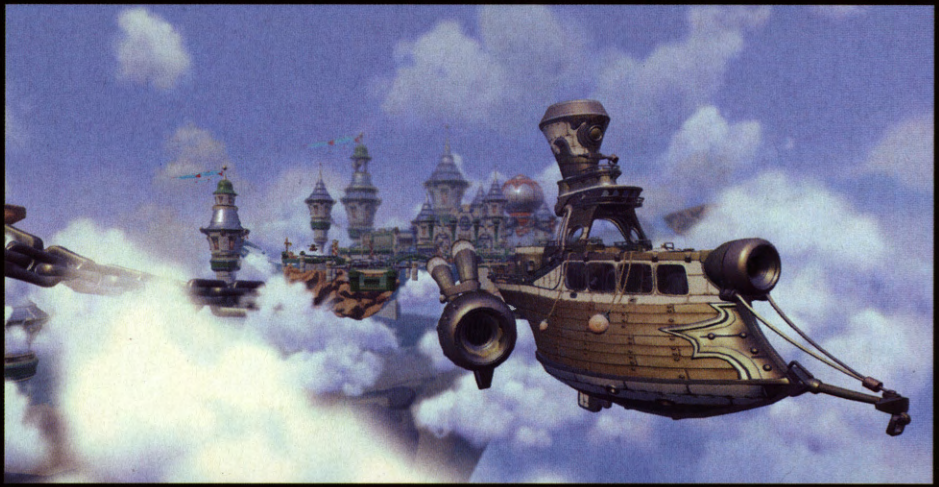
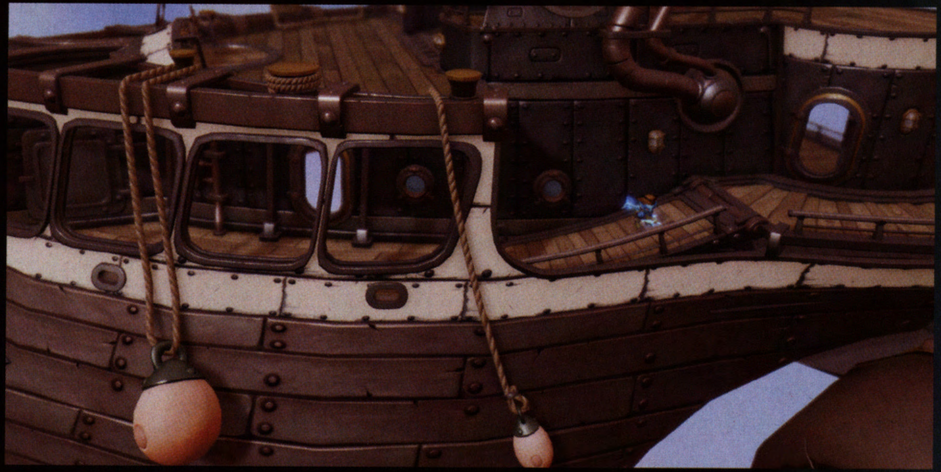


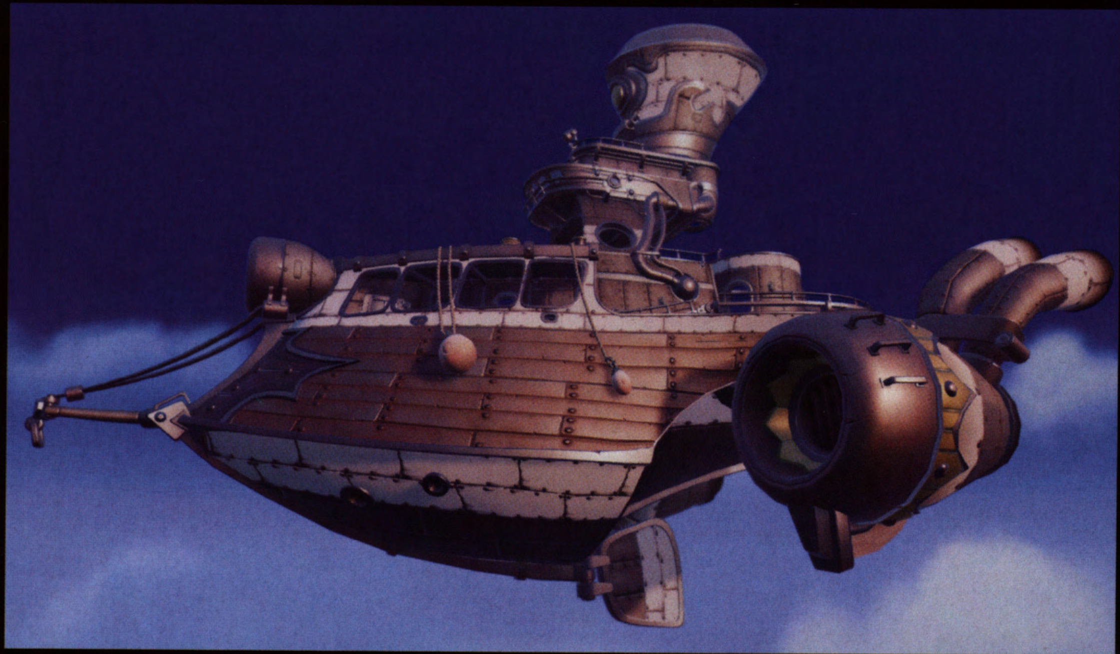




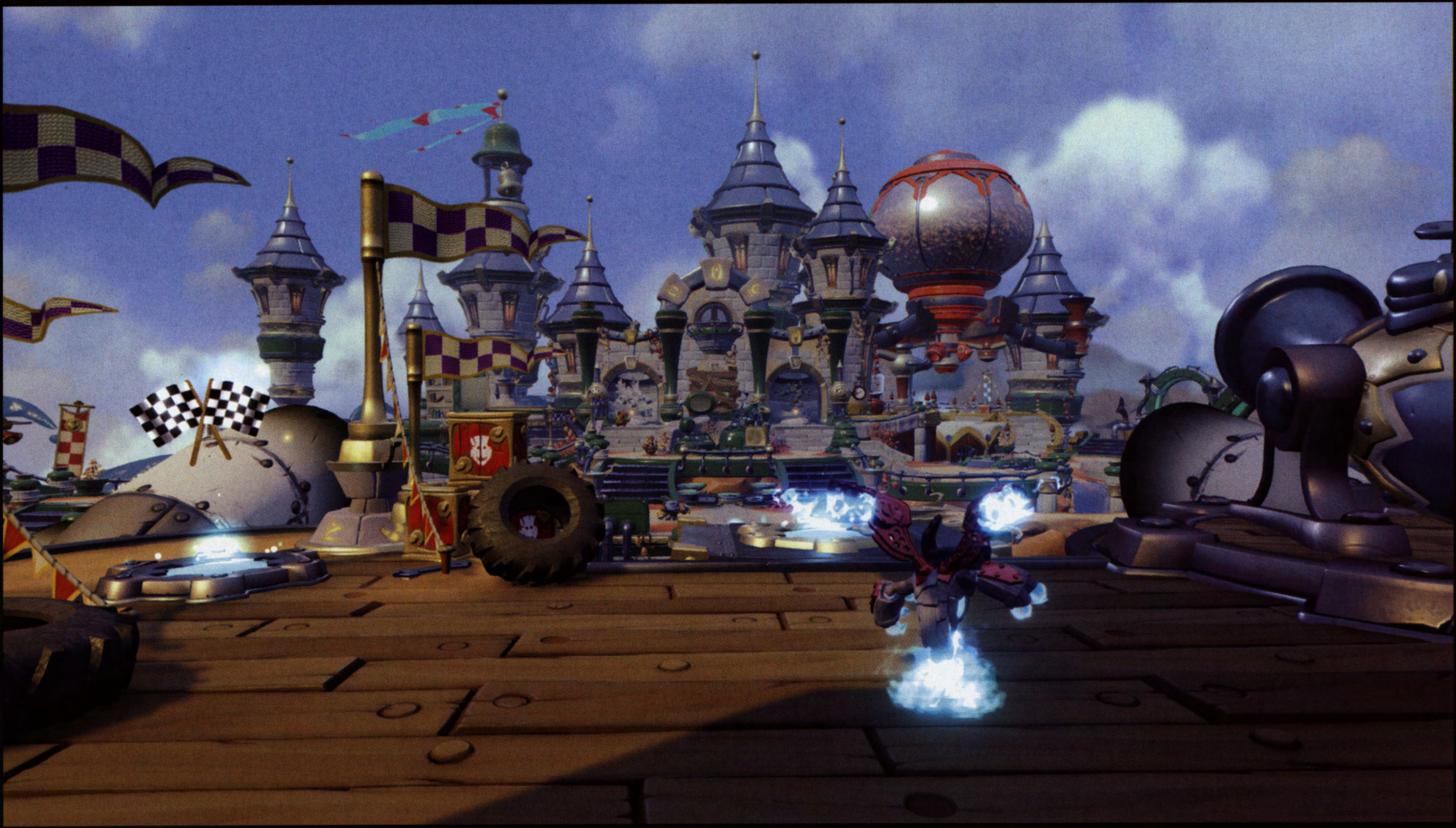




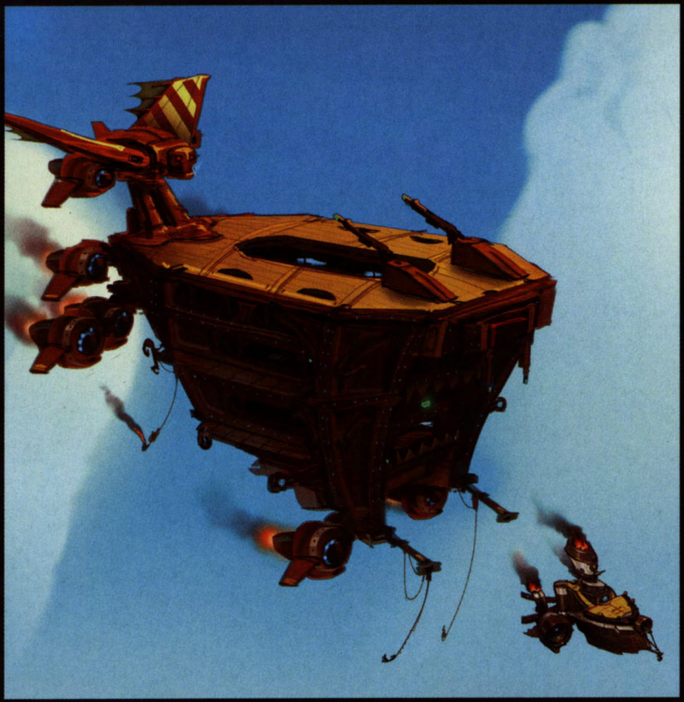


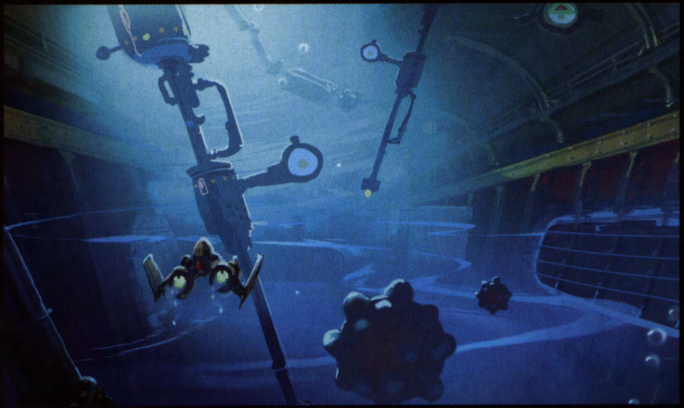


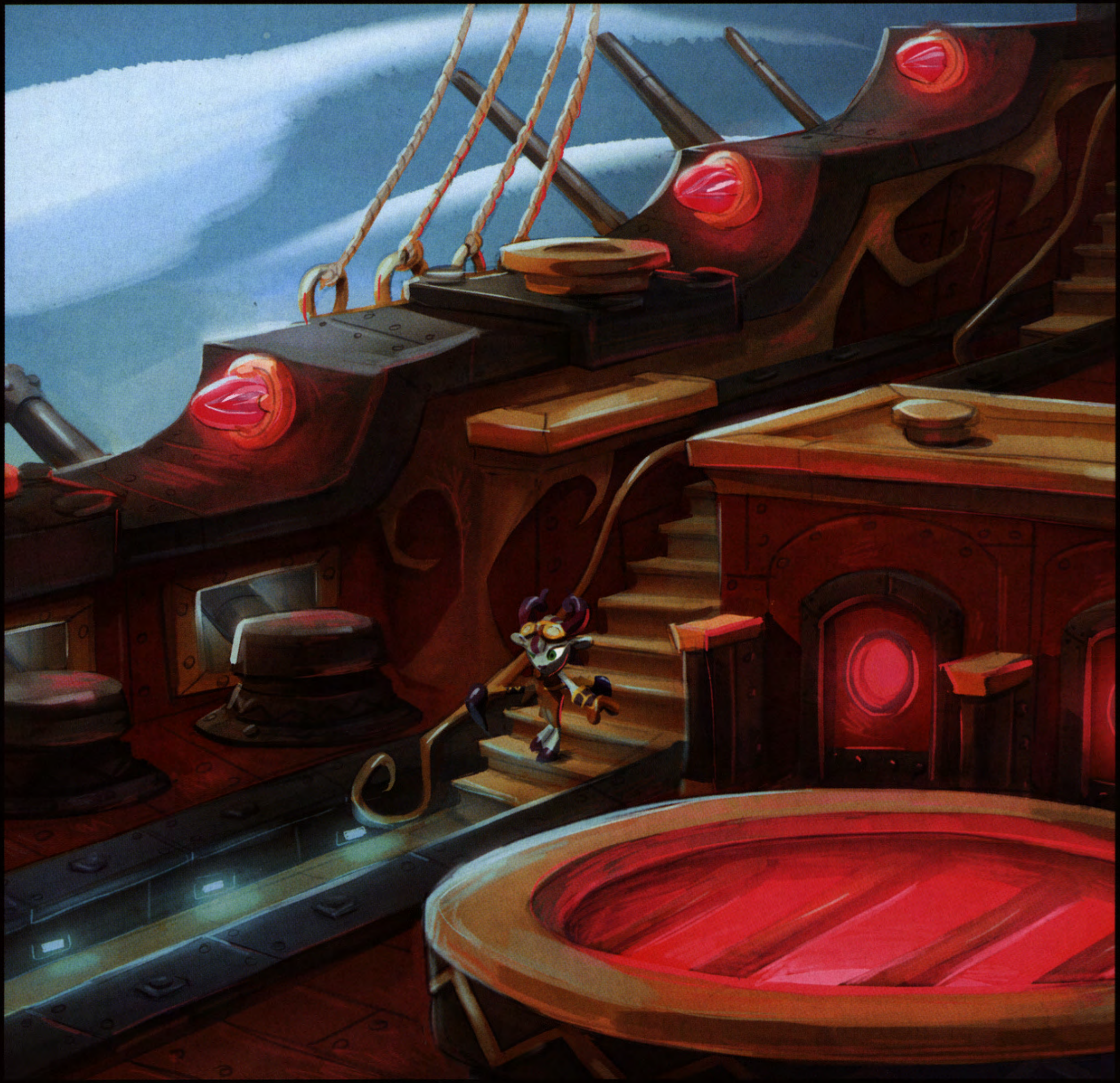
SCREENSHOTS



THE *RIFT TO SKYLANDS*

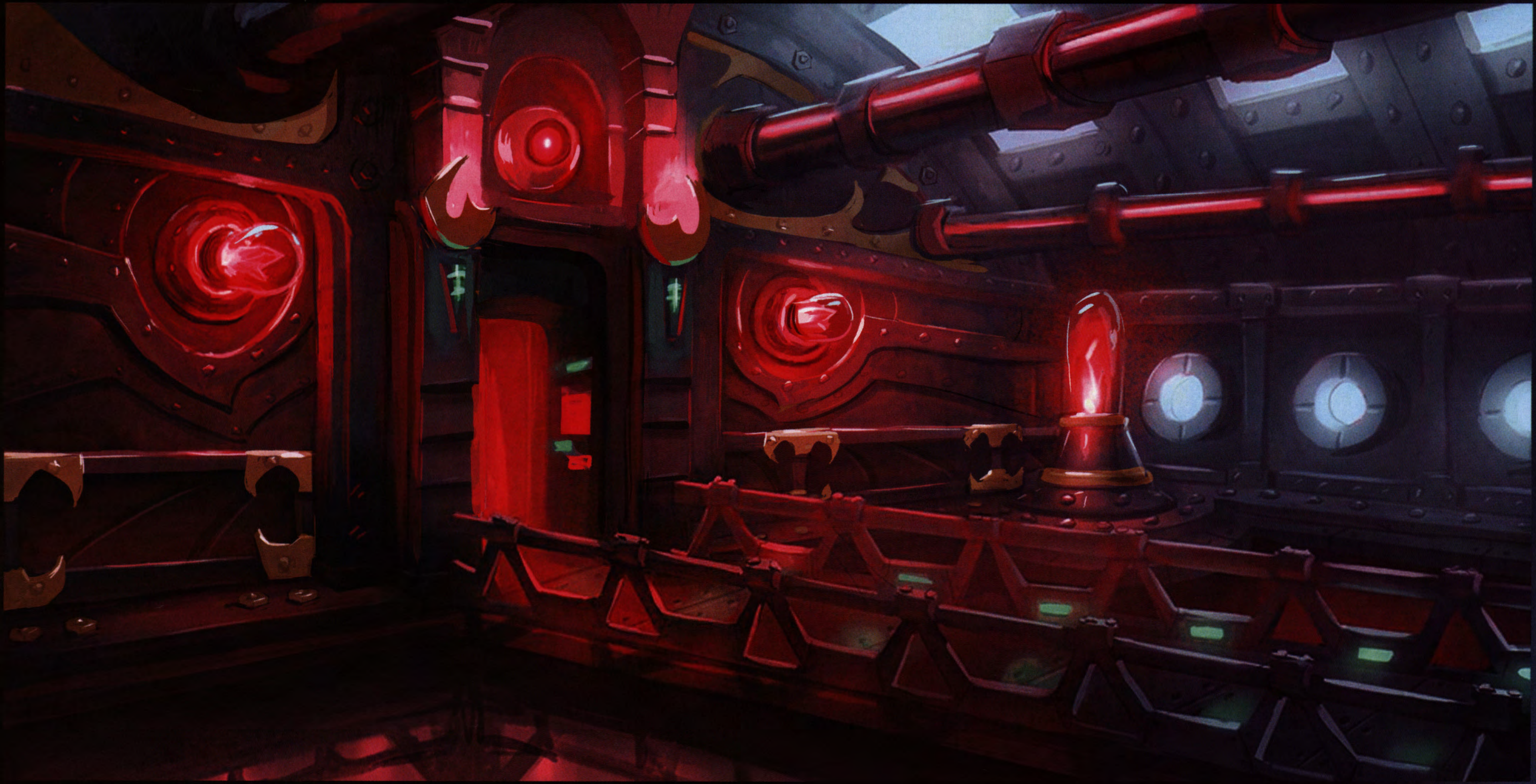


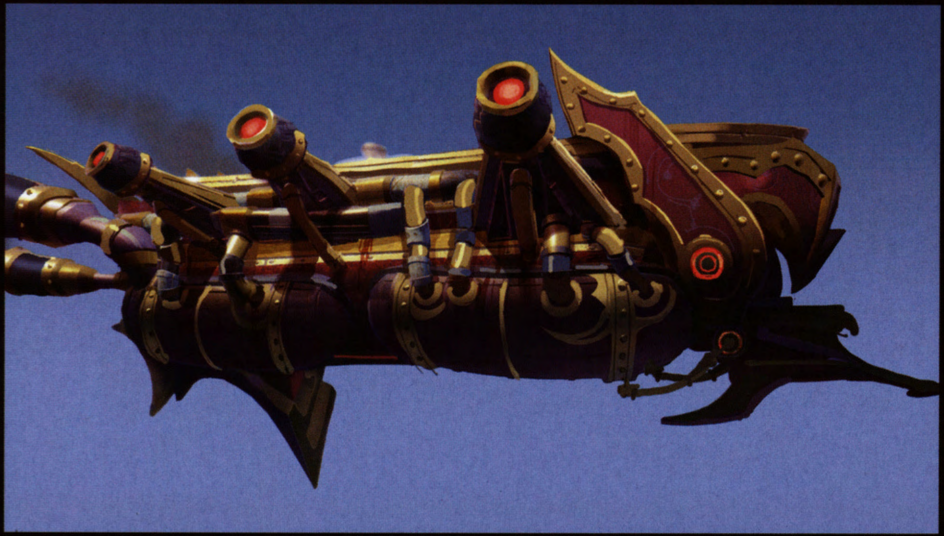


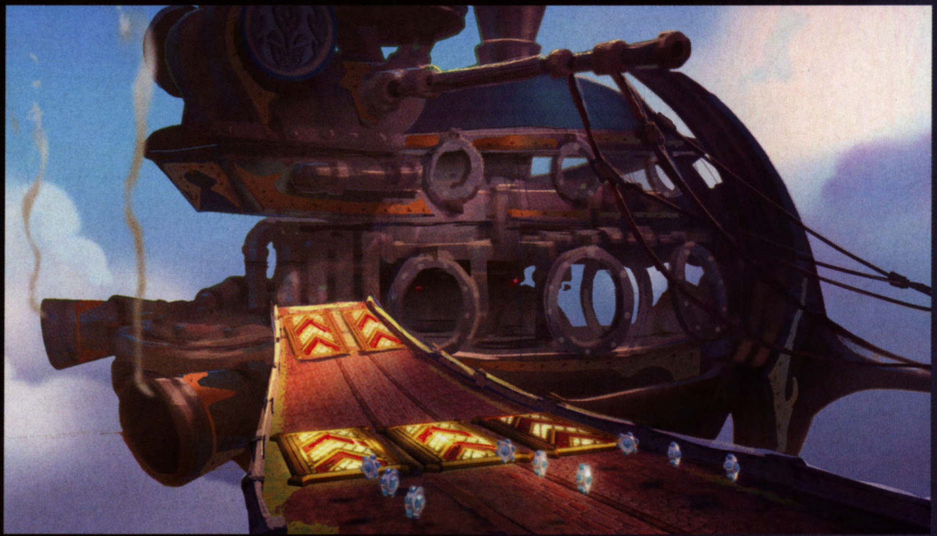


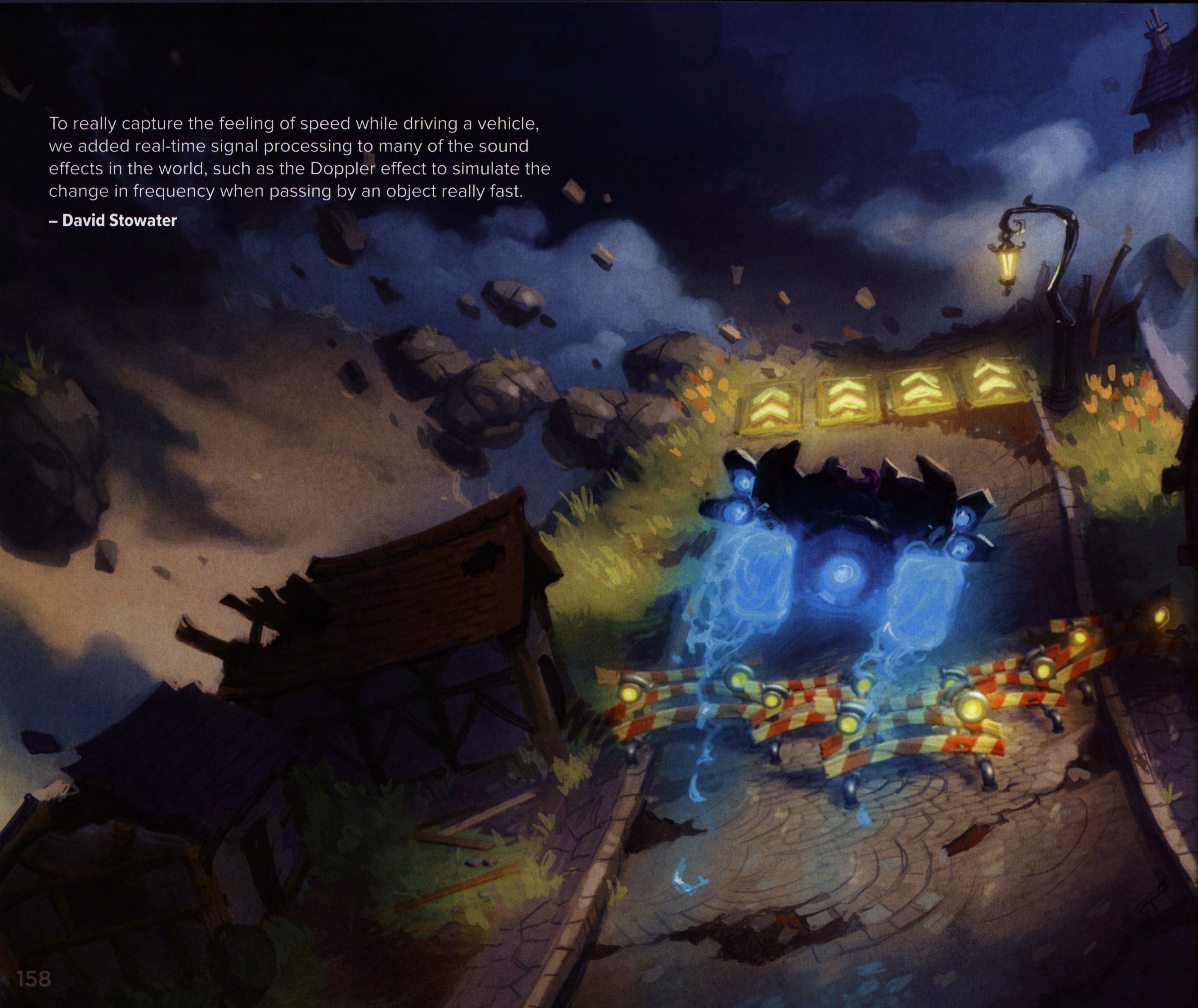
The atmospheric environments really pull you into the experience. The scenery is full and vibrant throughout the whole journey, blending realism with that trademark Skylanders wonkiness. It's quite stunning.

– Luke Anderson



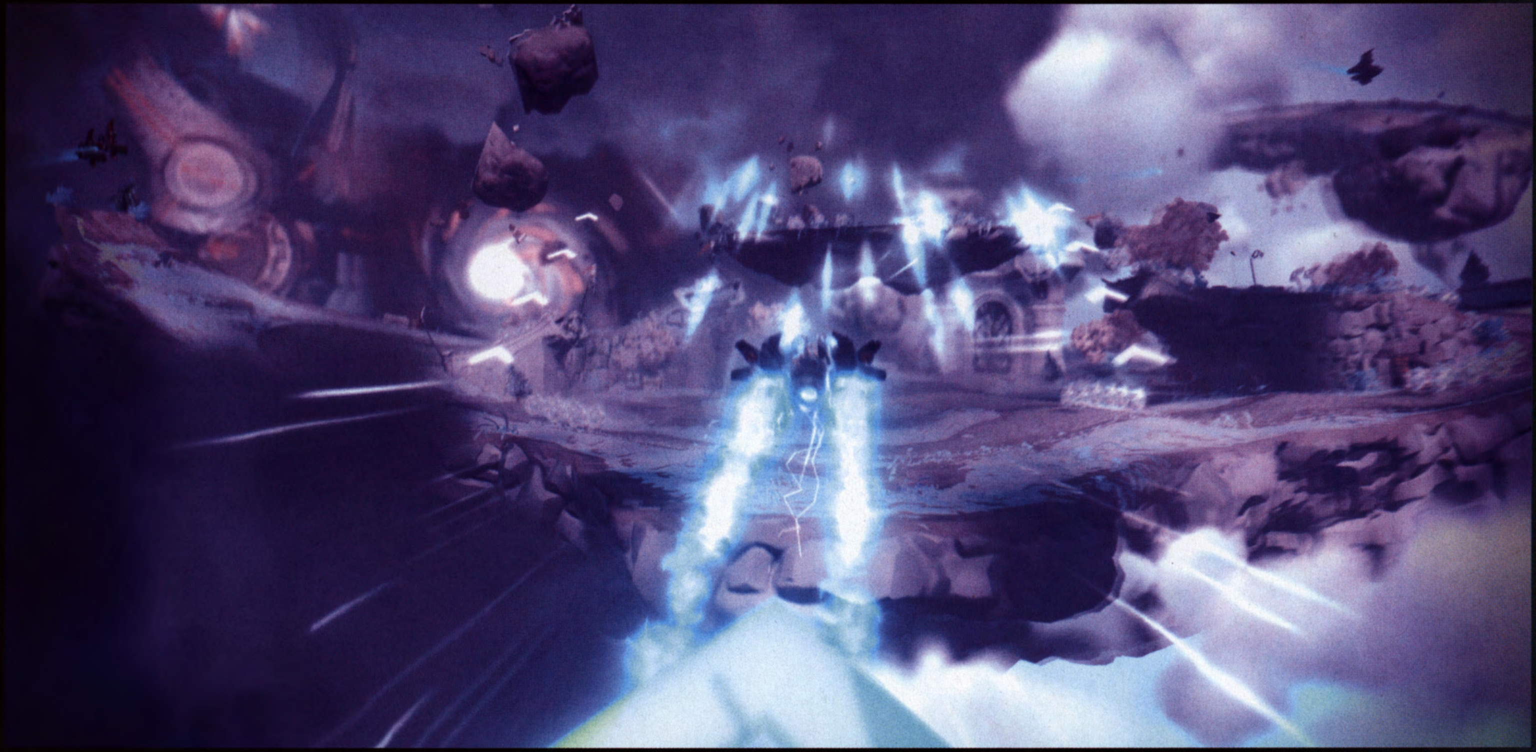




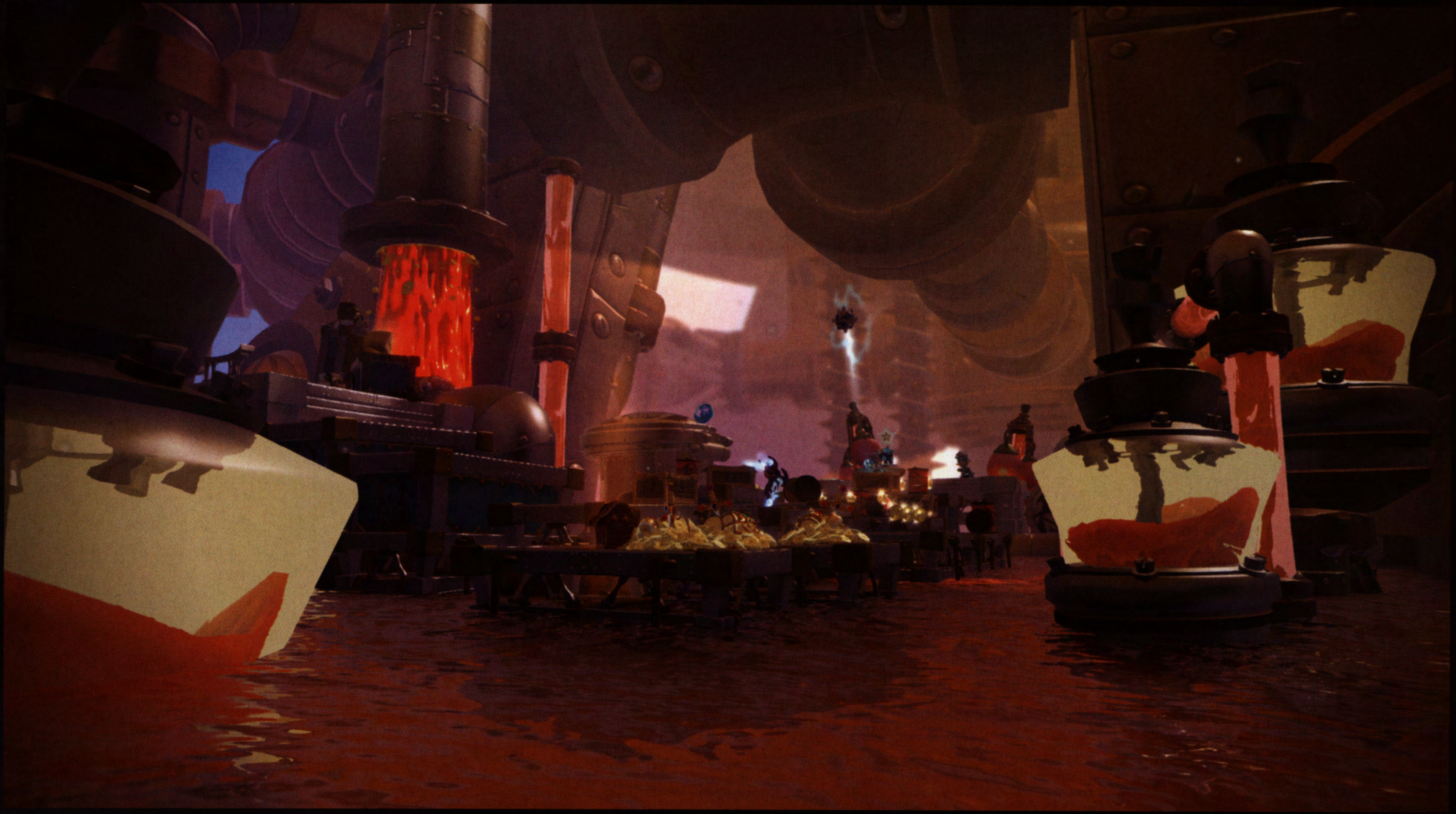


To really capture the feeling of speed while driving a vehicle, we added real-time signal processing to many of the sound effects in the world, such as the Doppler effect to simulate the change in frequency when passing by an object really fast.

– David Stowater



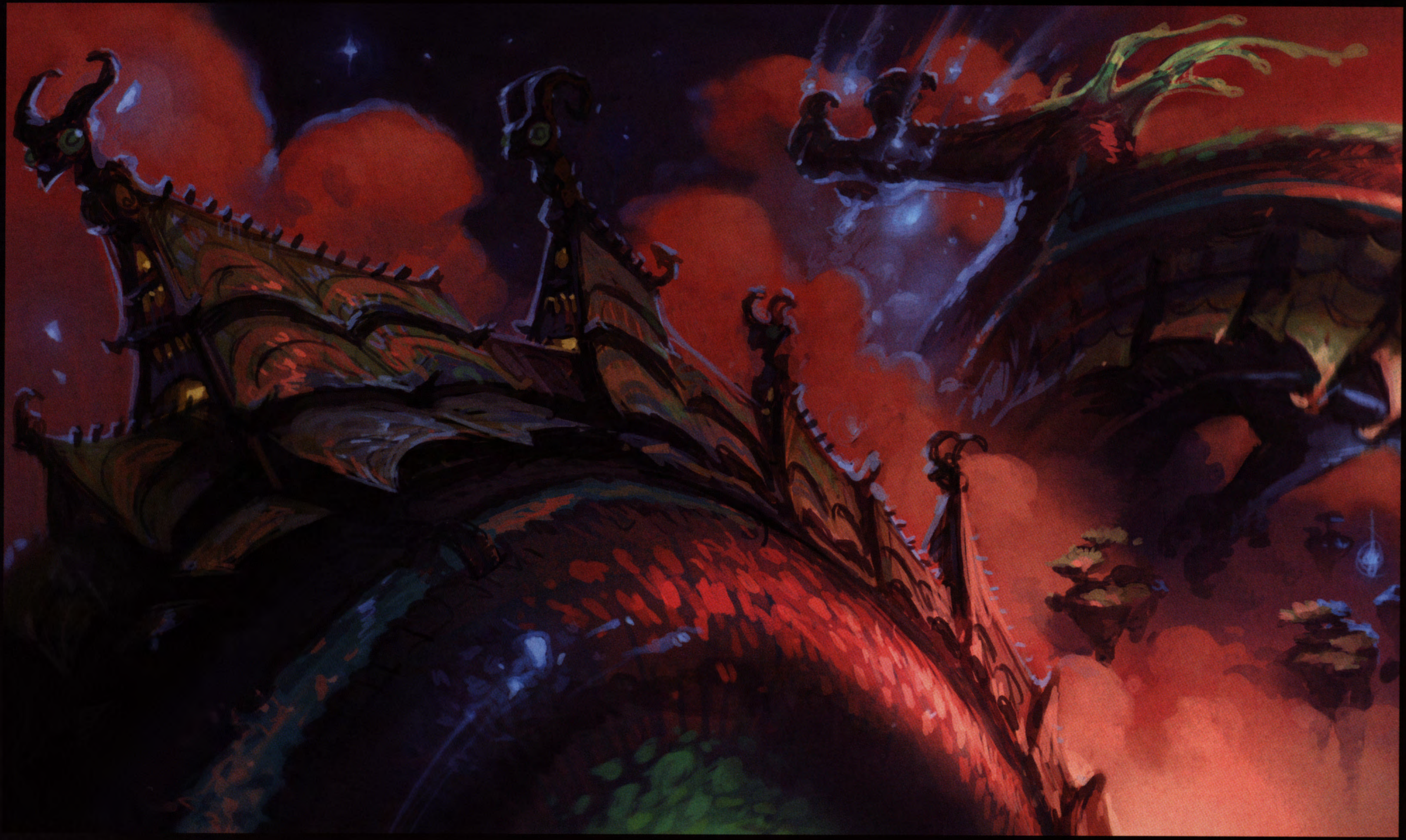
SCREENSHOTS



I just love the ever-changing scales used in the myriad of levels.

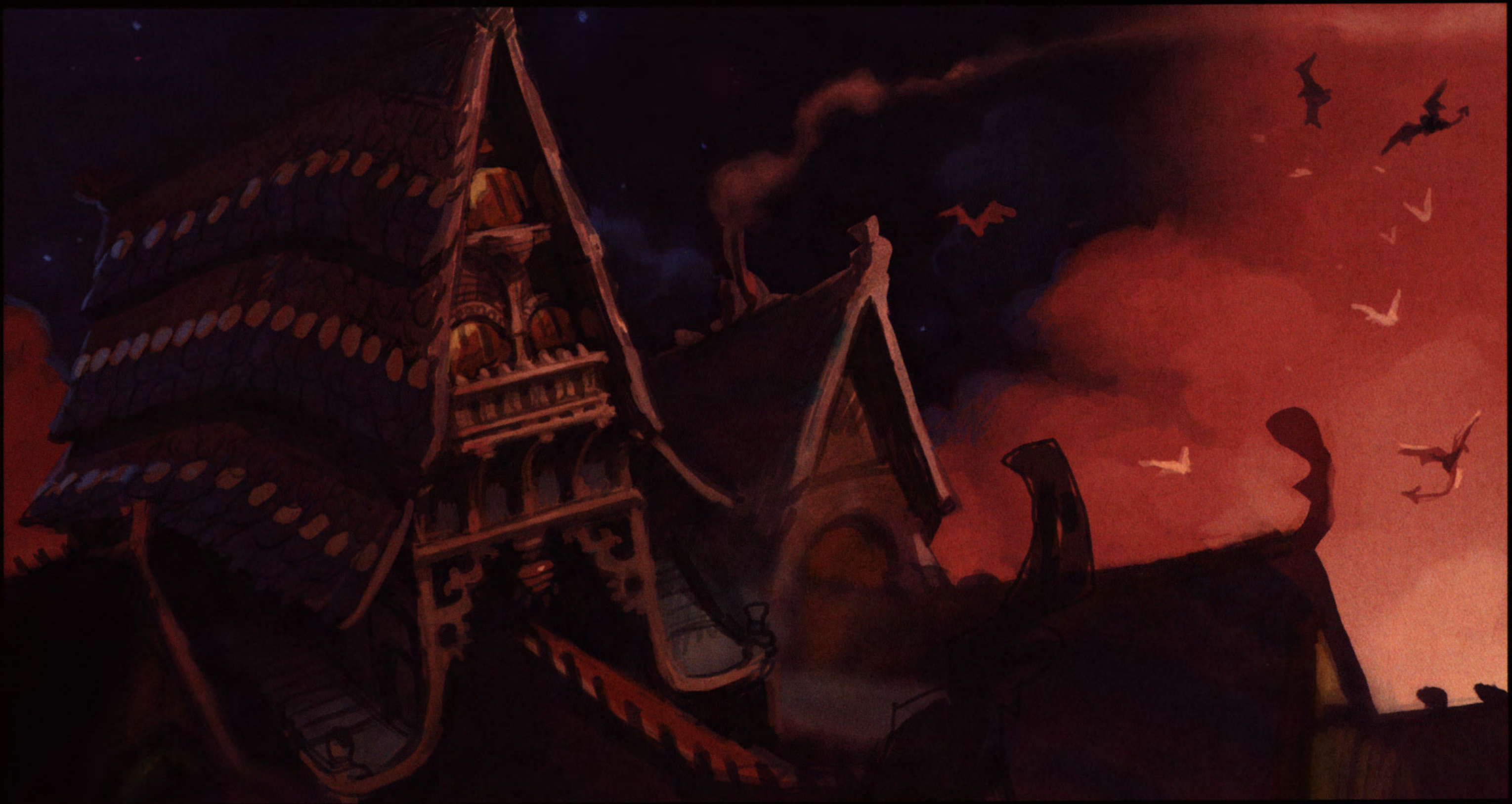
– Matt Bishop

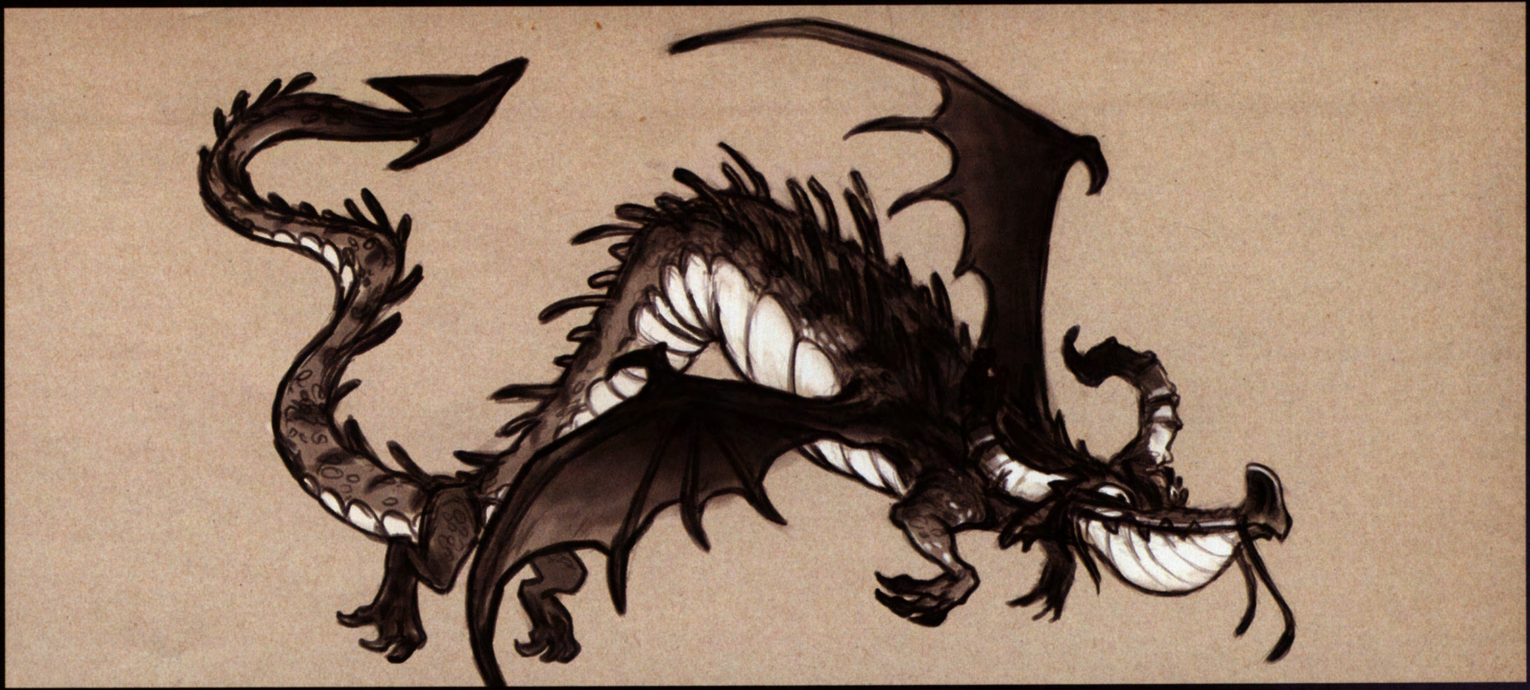
THE CLOUDBREATHER'S CRAG

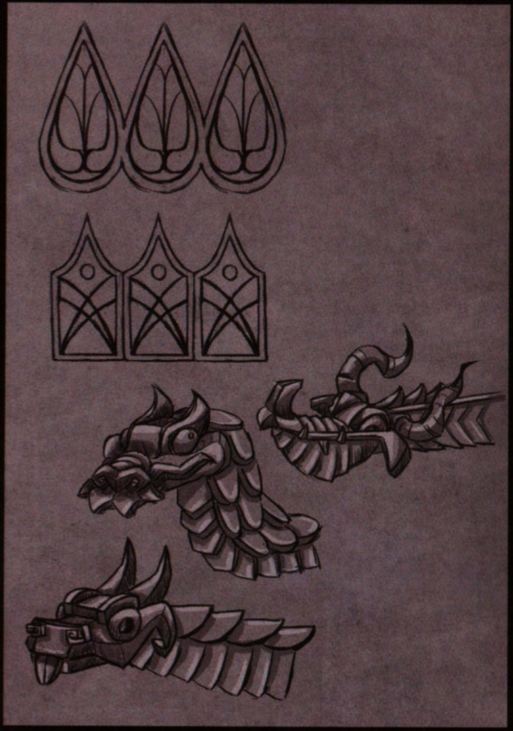


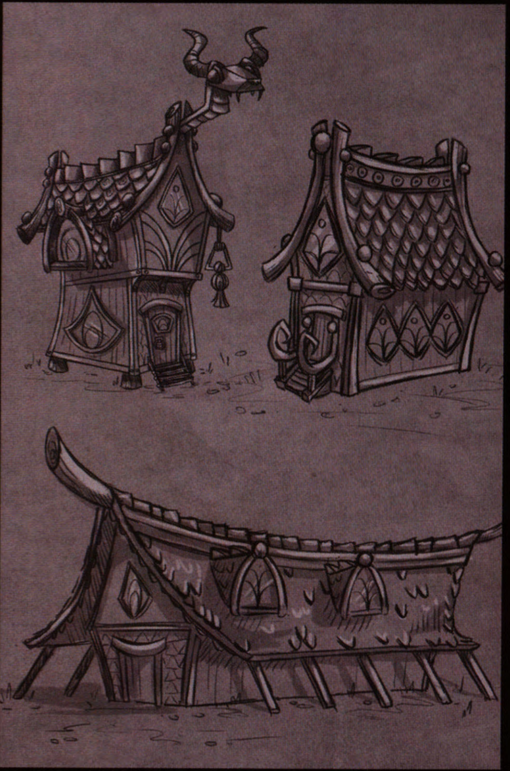
Having an articulating village on the back of a giant dragon is freakin' magical.

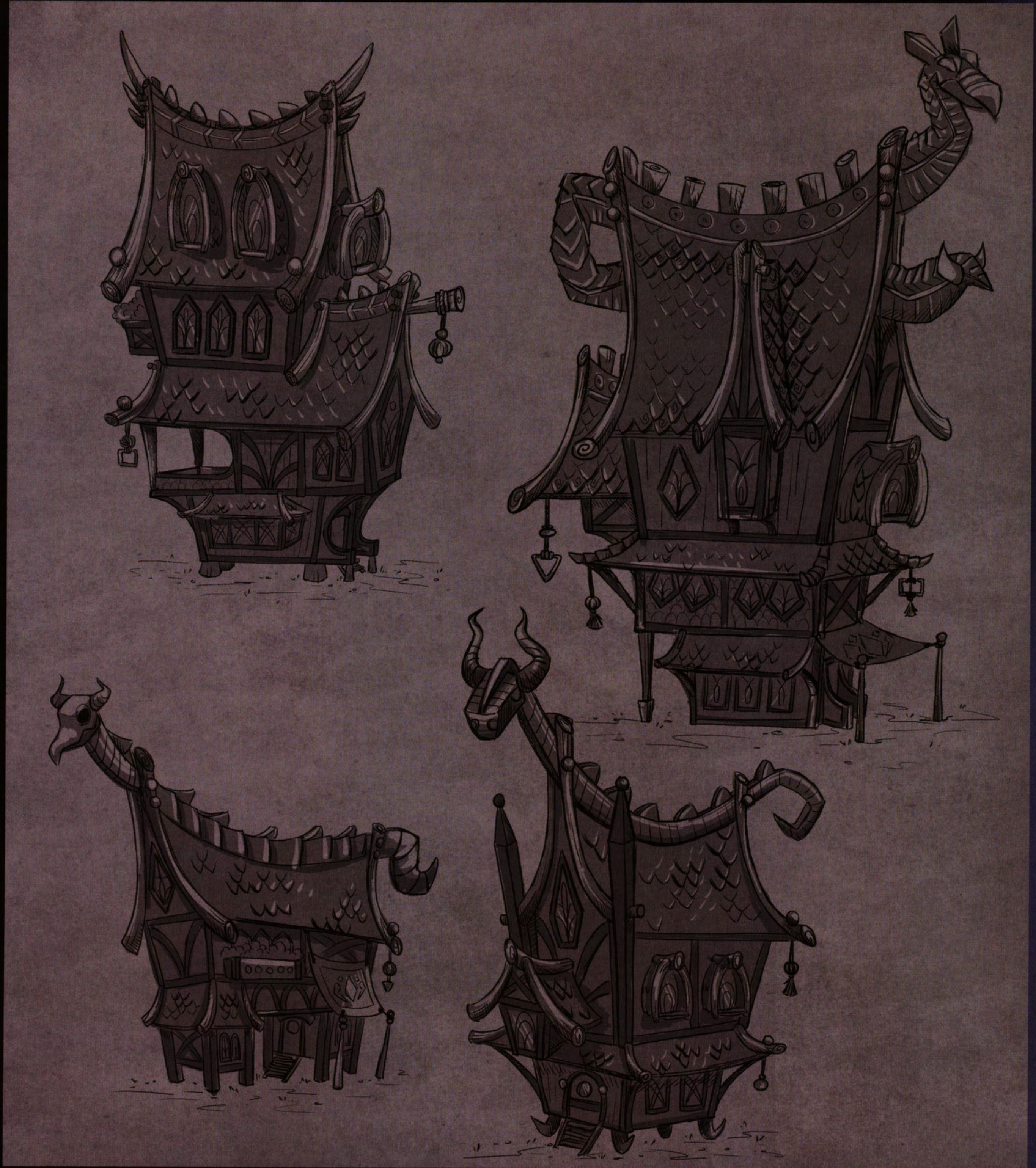
– Jeff Bellio

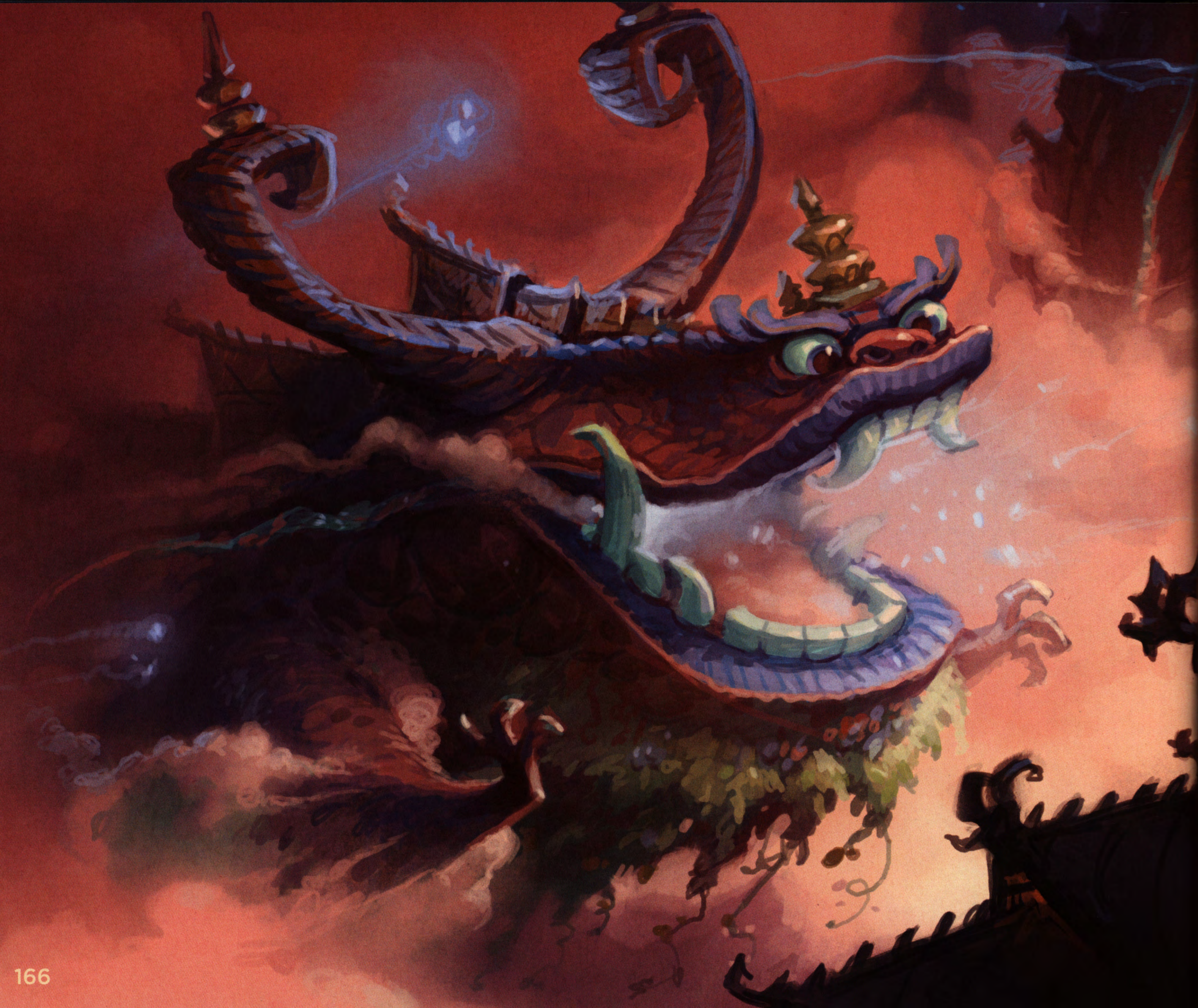


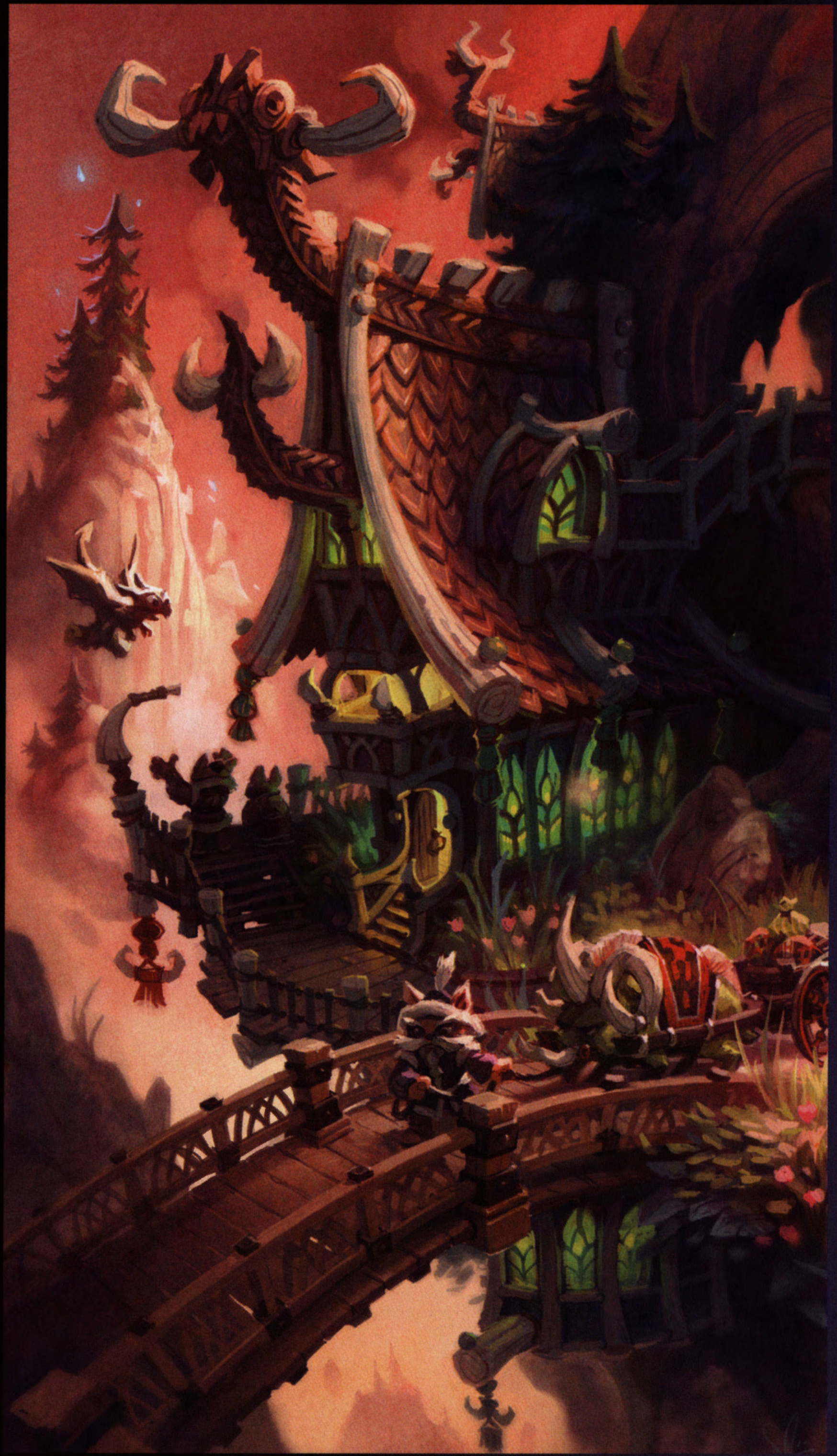


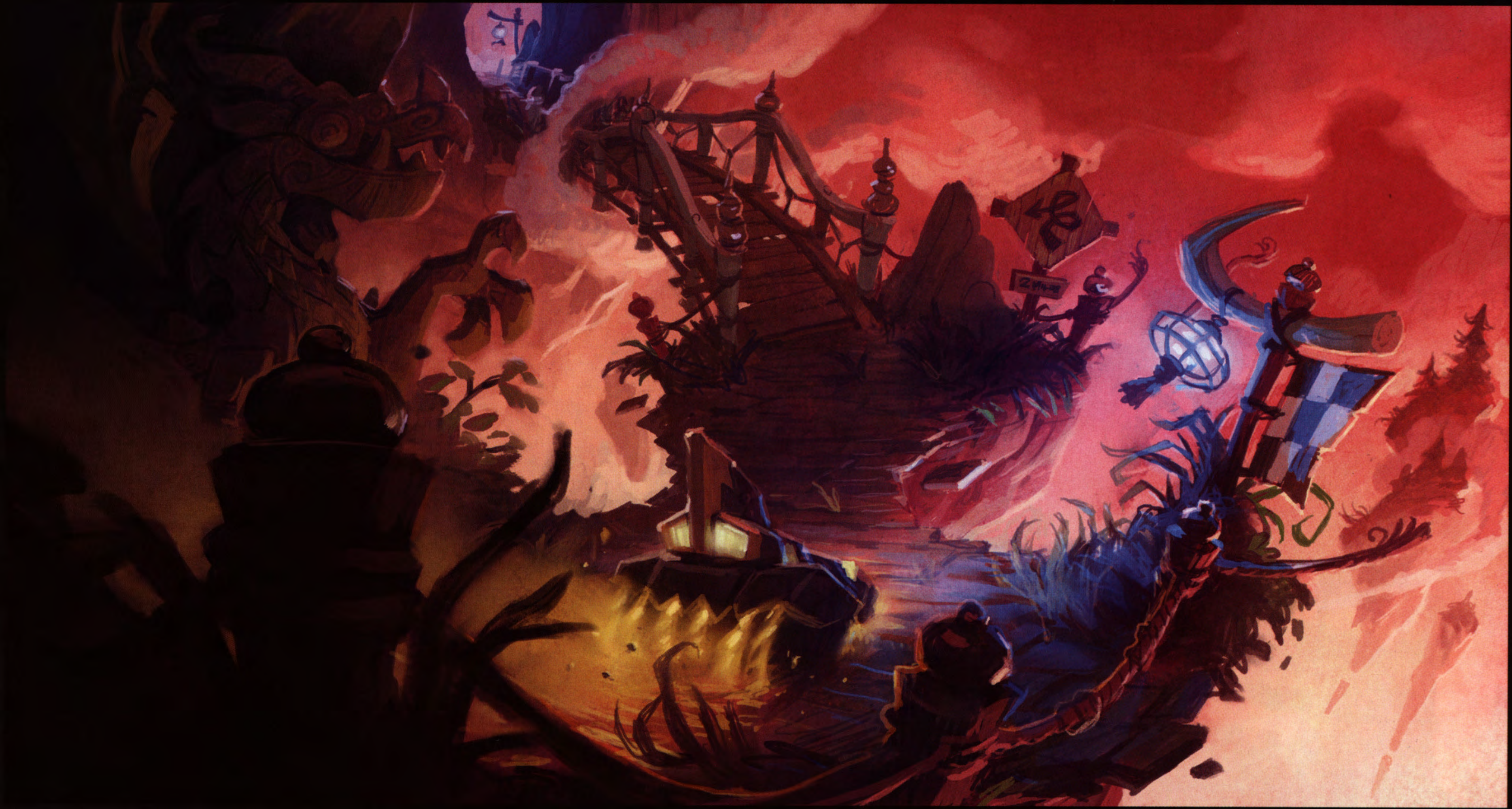


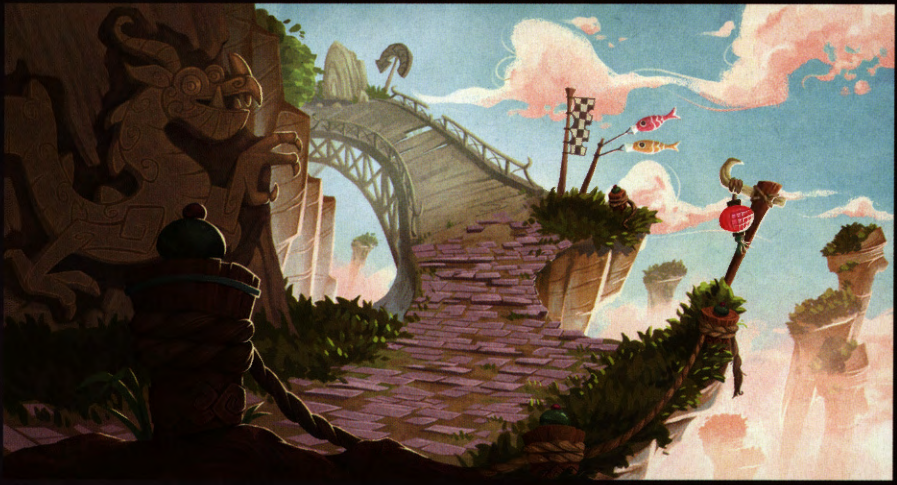


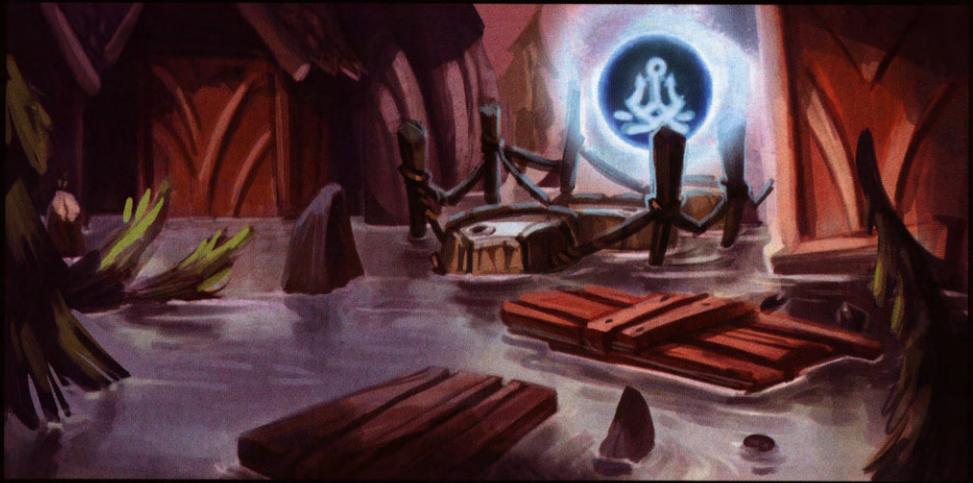


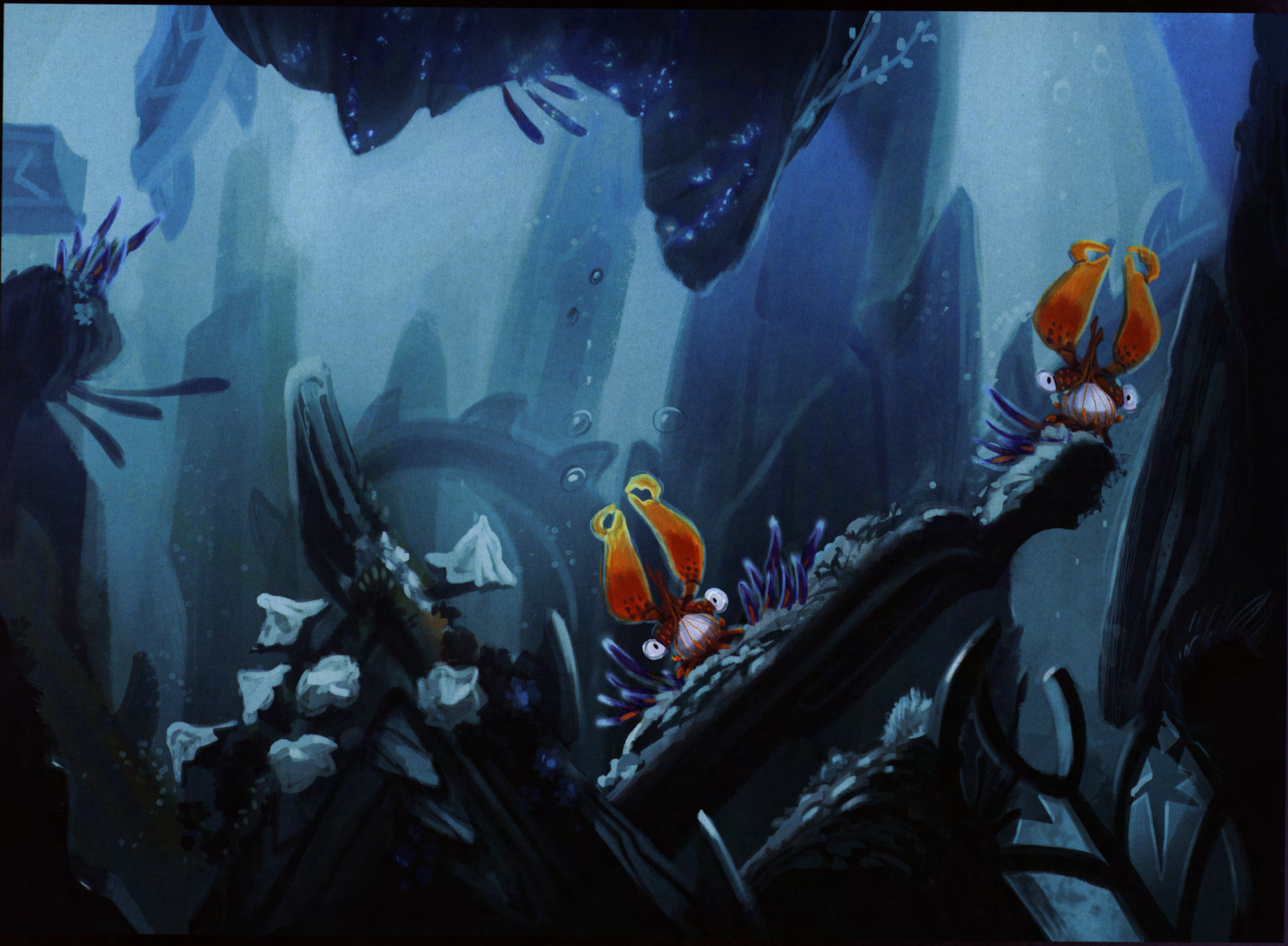


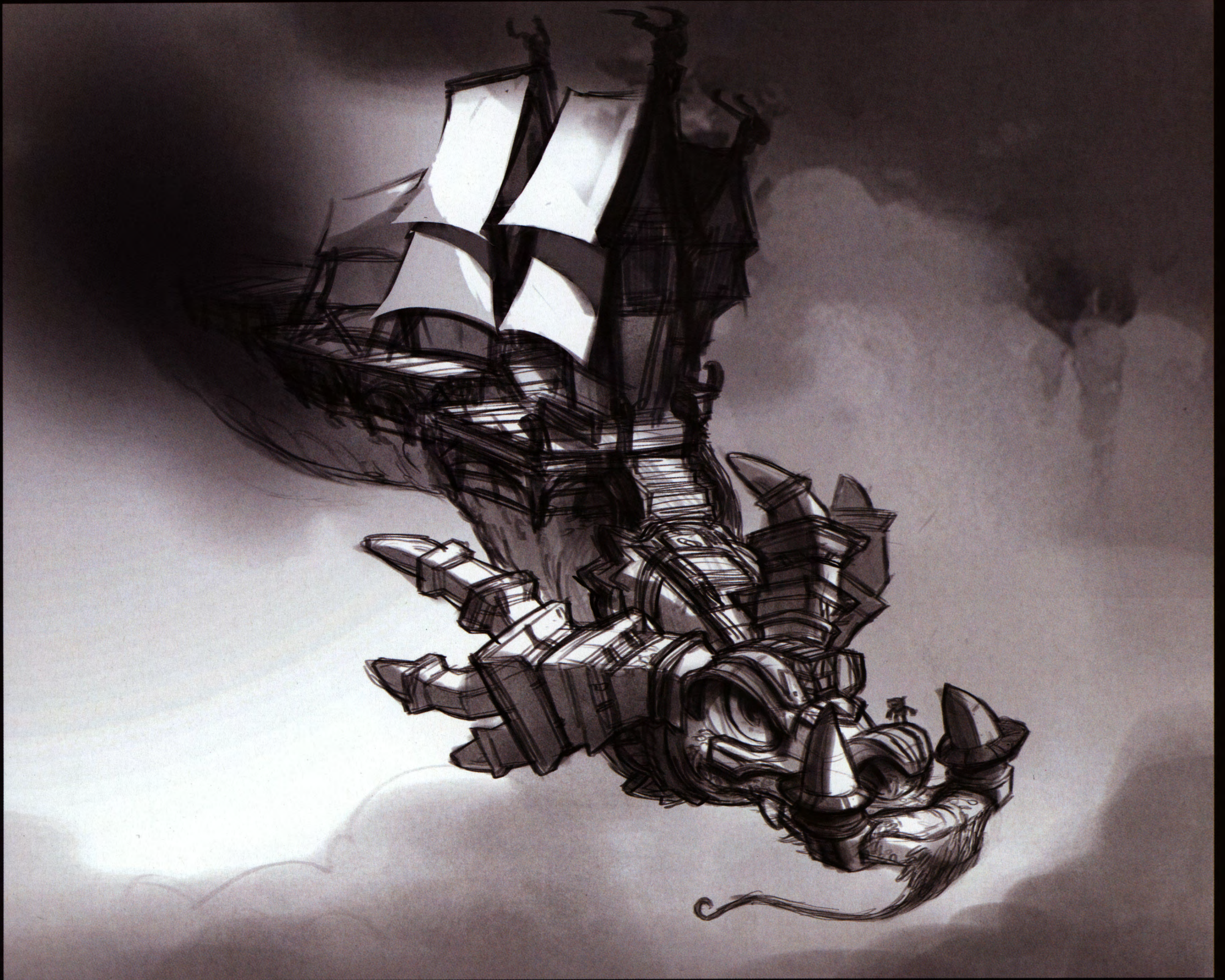


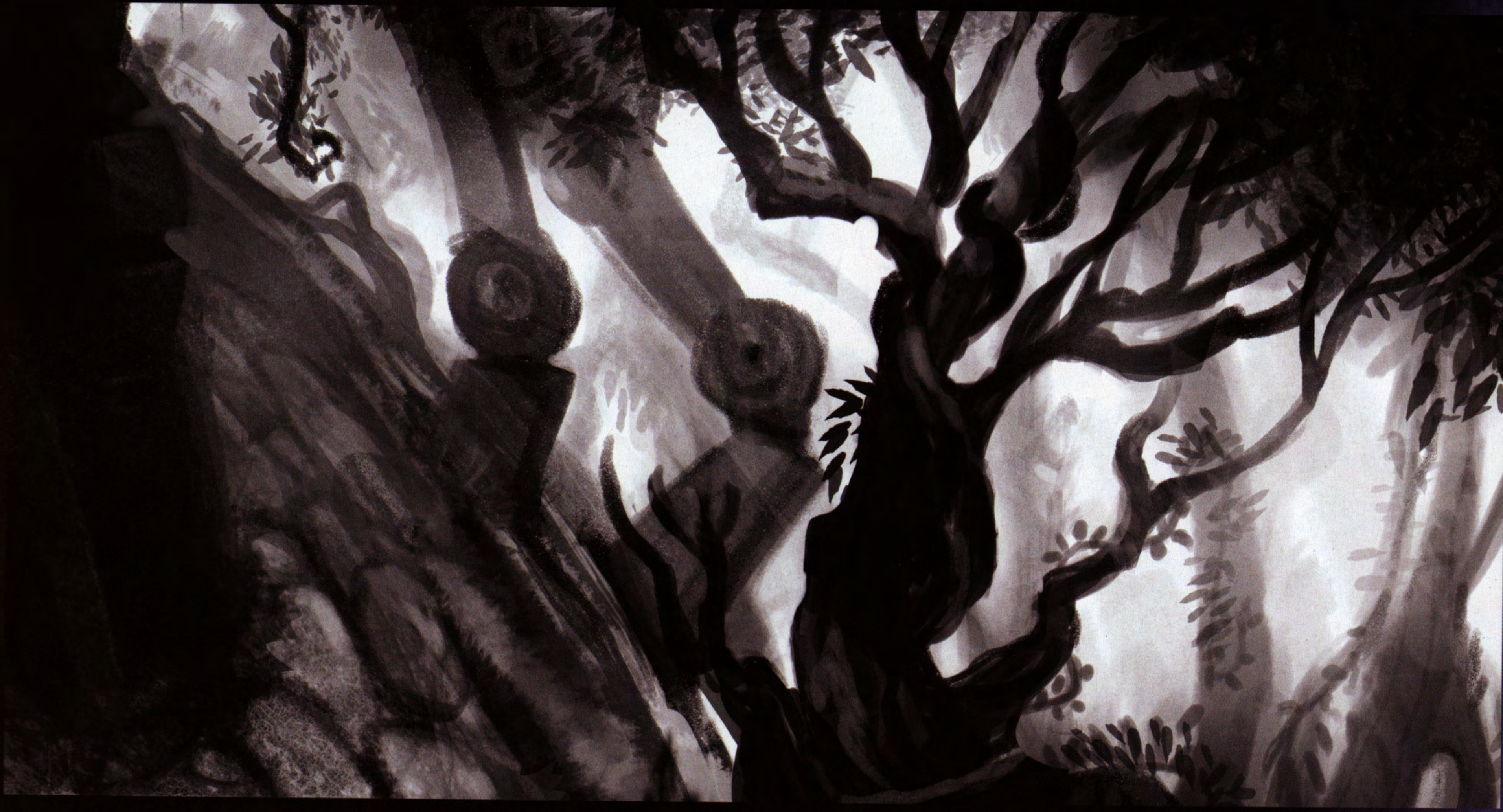


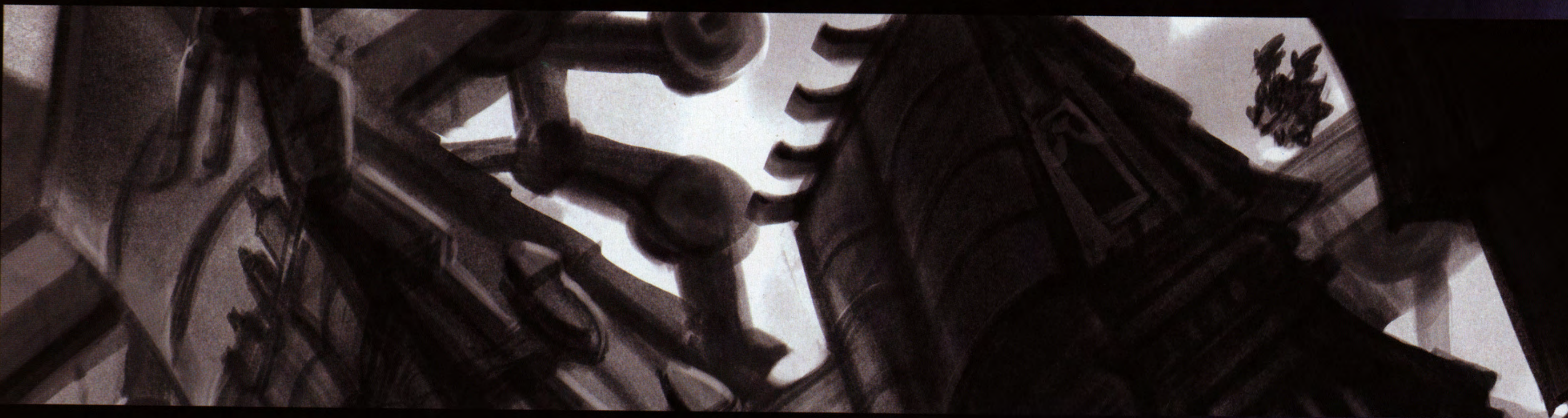




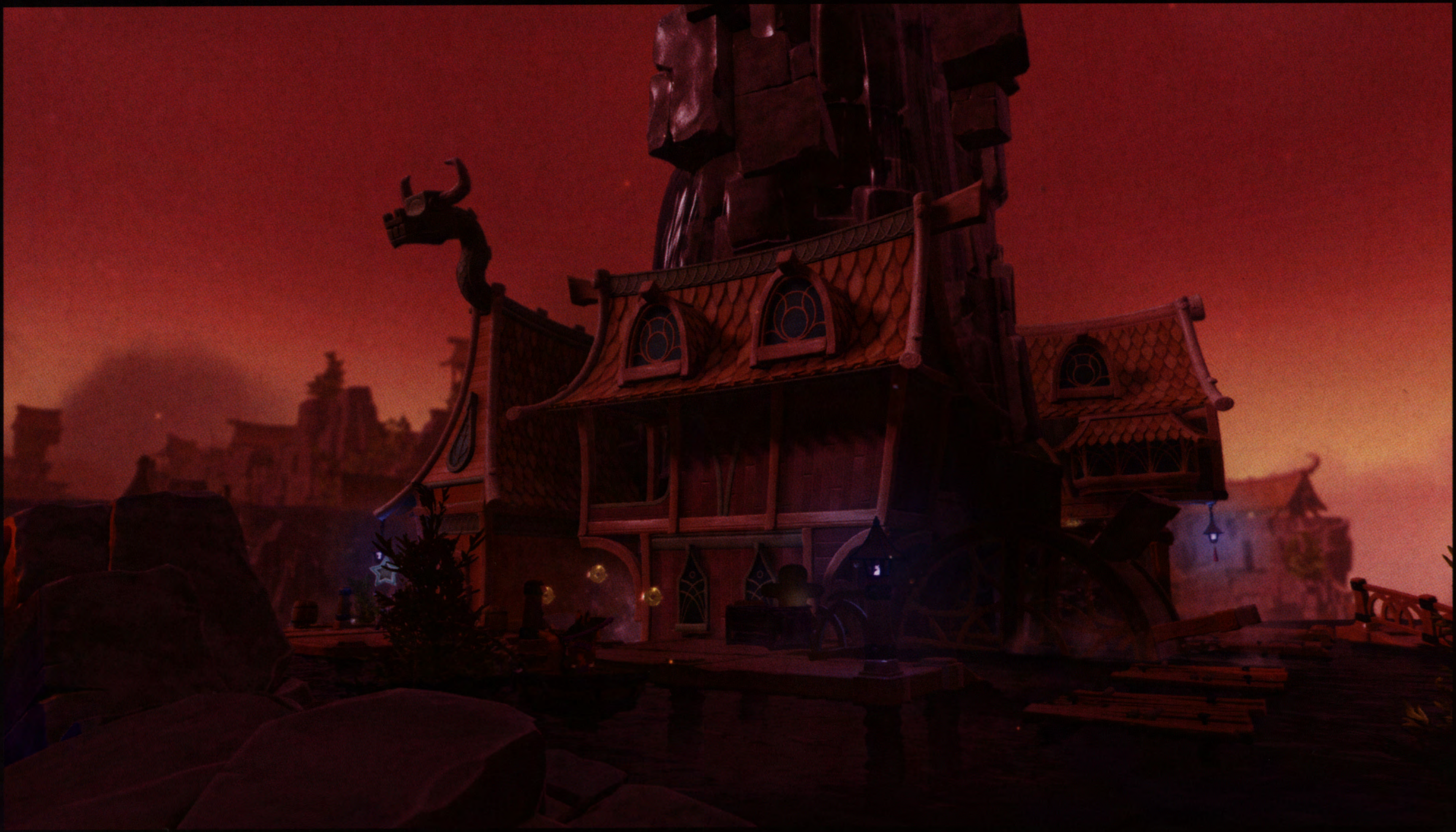






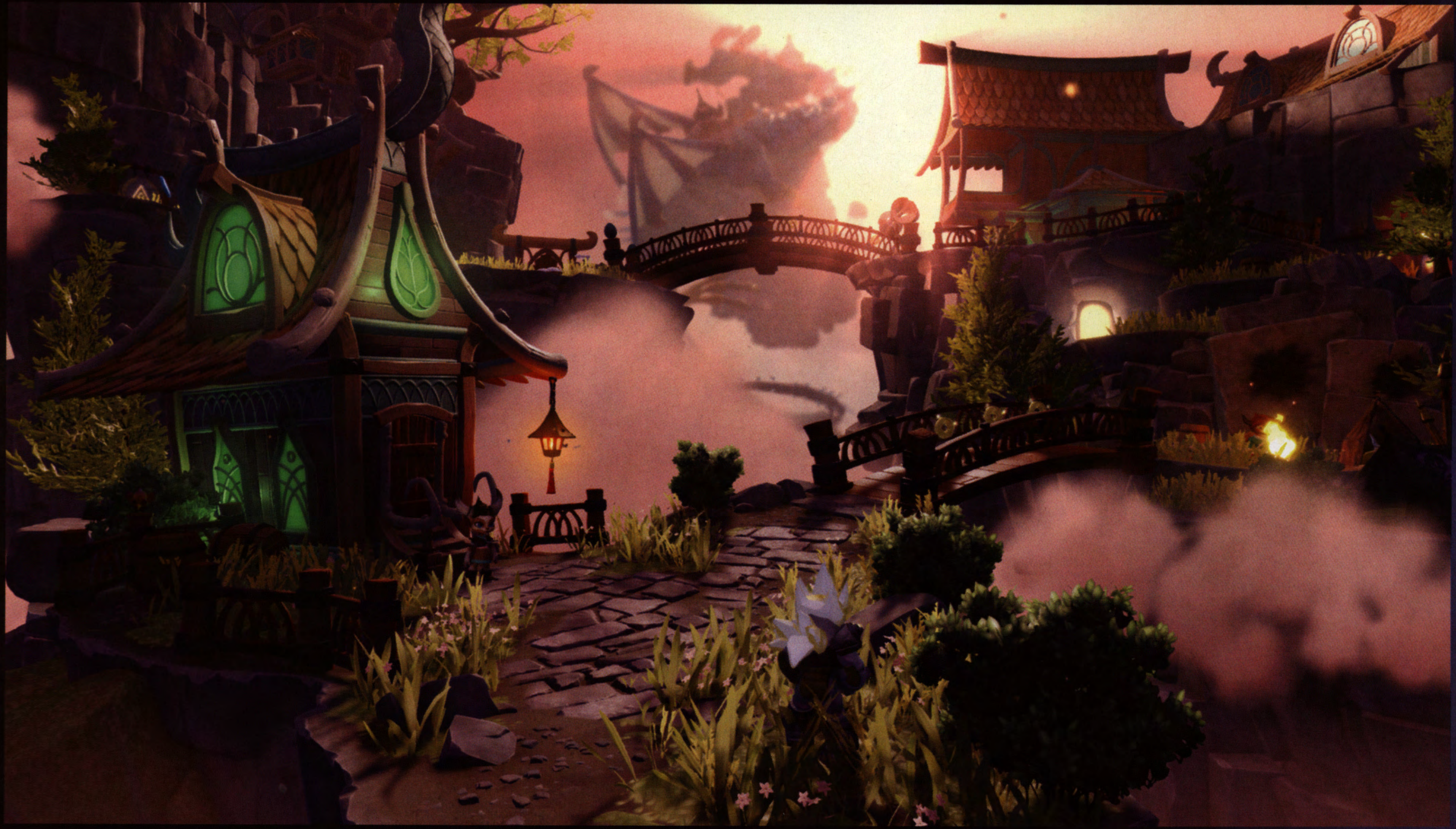


SCREENSHOTS

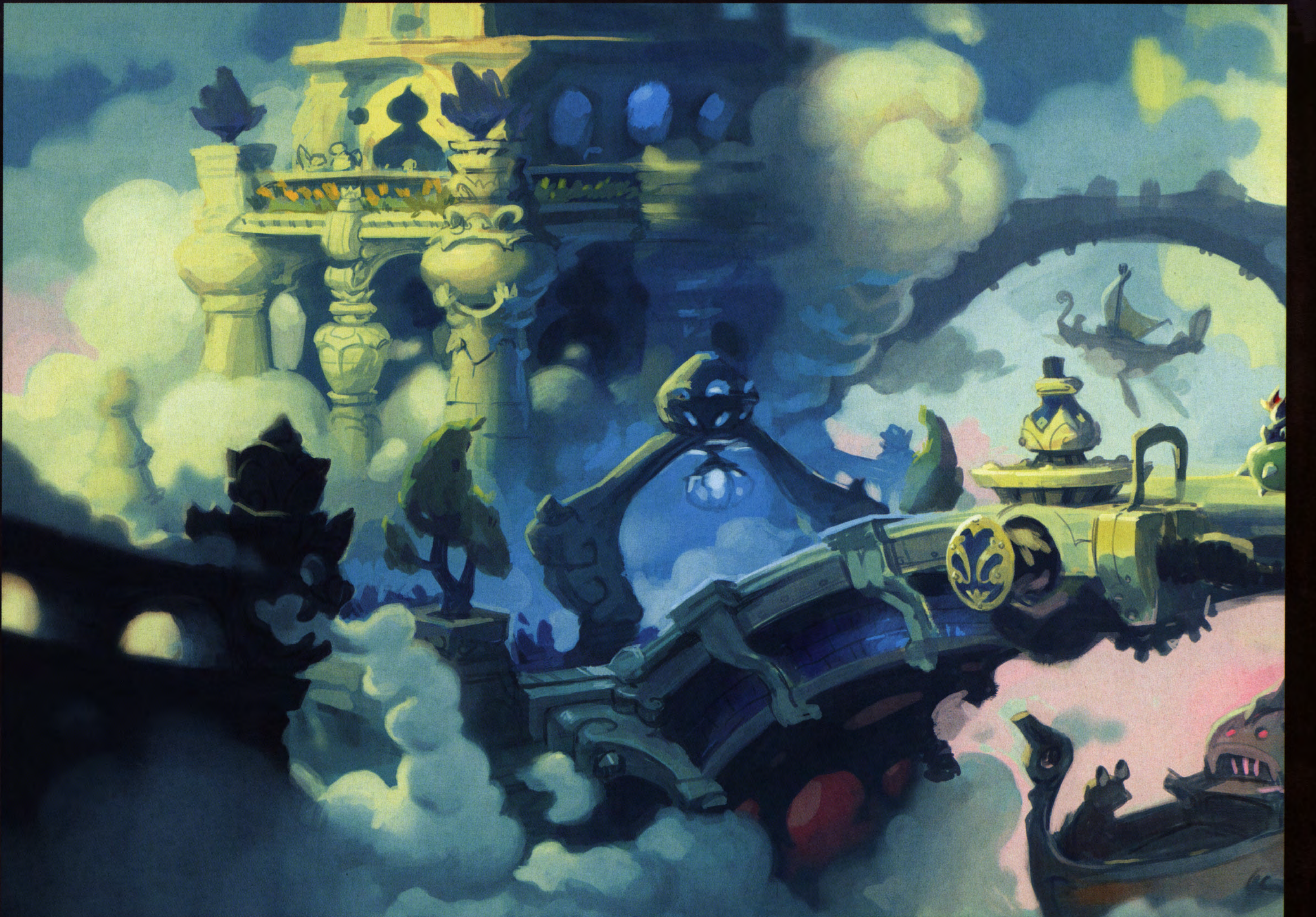


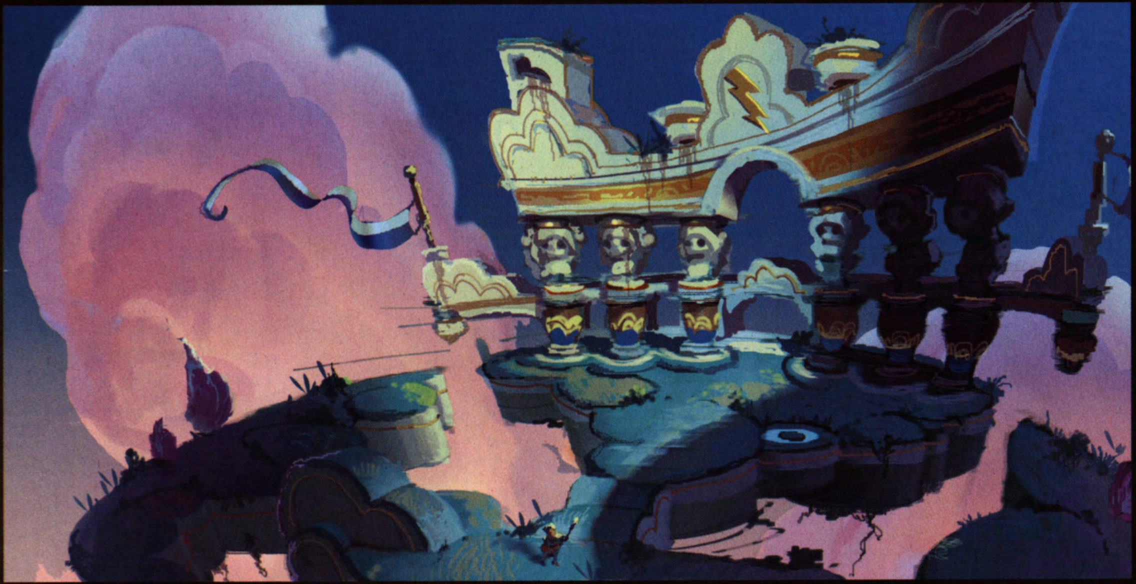
The level on the back of a dragon blew my mind. The moment I saw the concepts where the dragon was looking back at the buildings, I was sold.

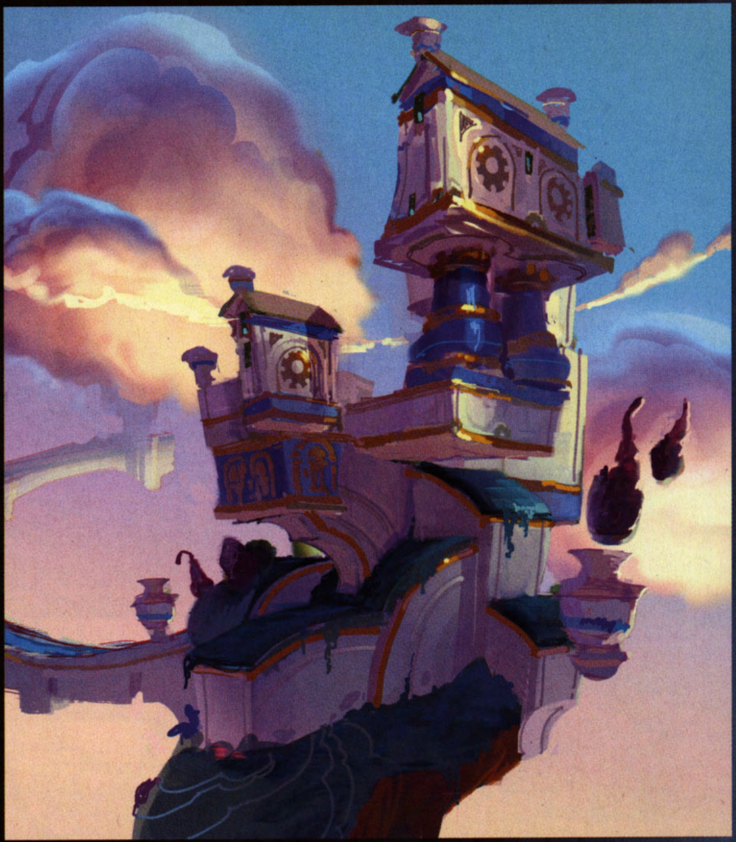
– Stephen Moss

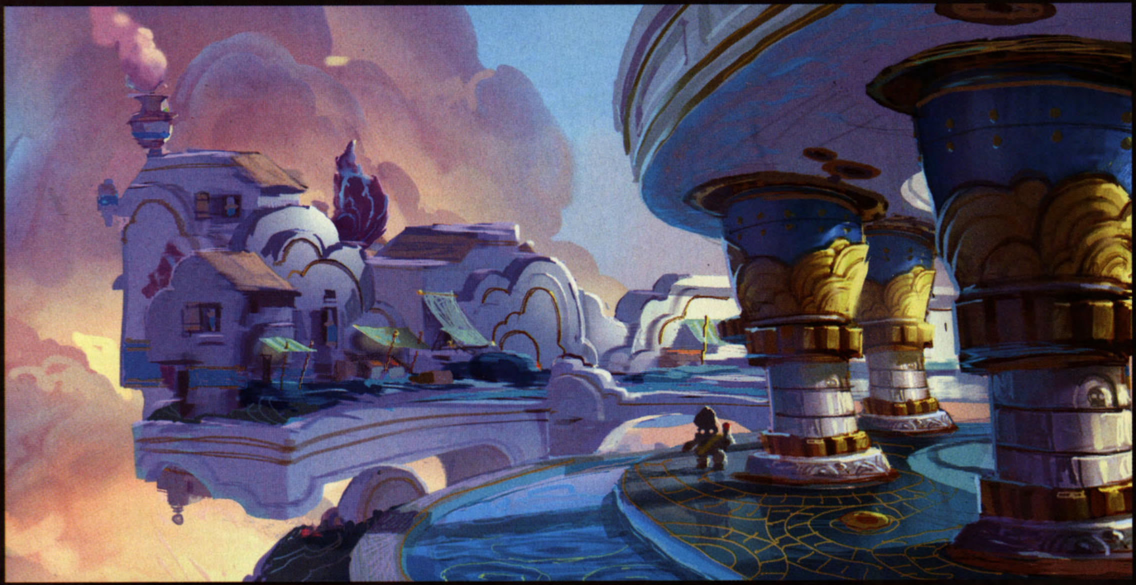


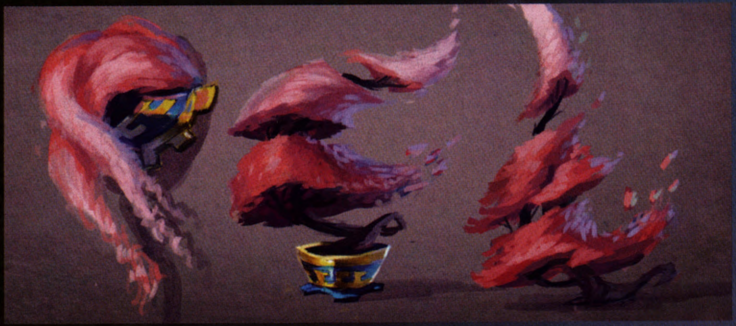
THE CLOUD KINGDOM

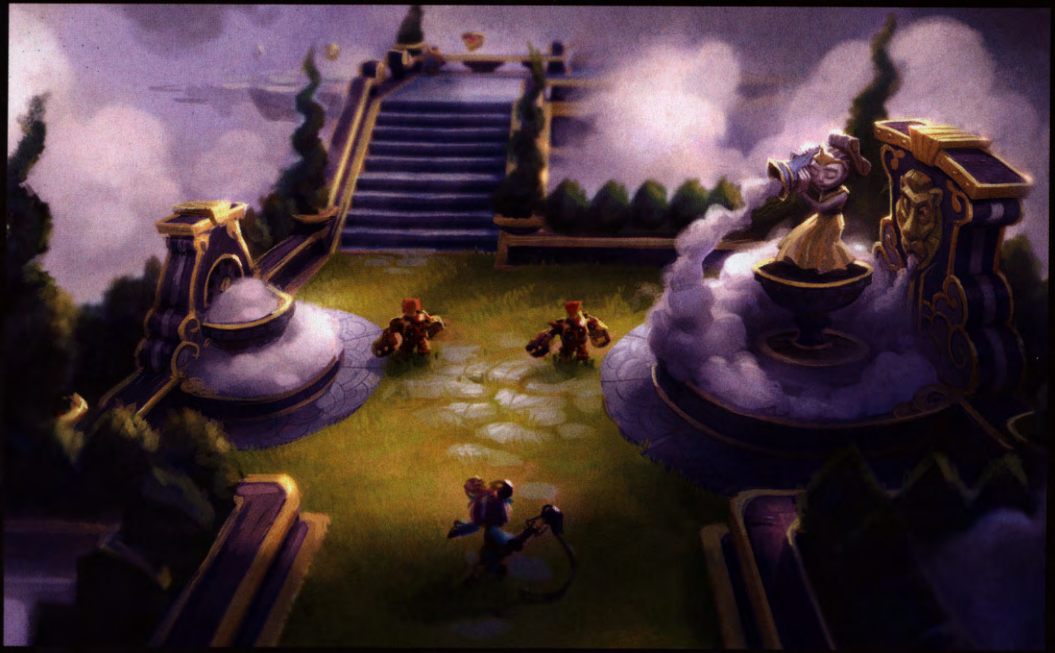


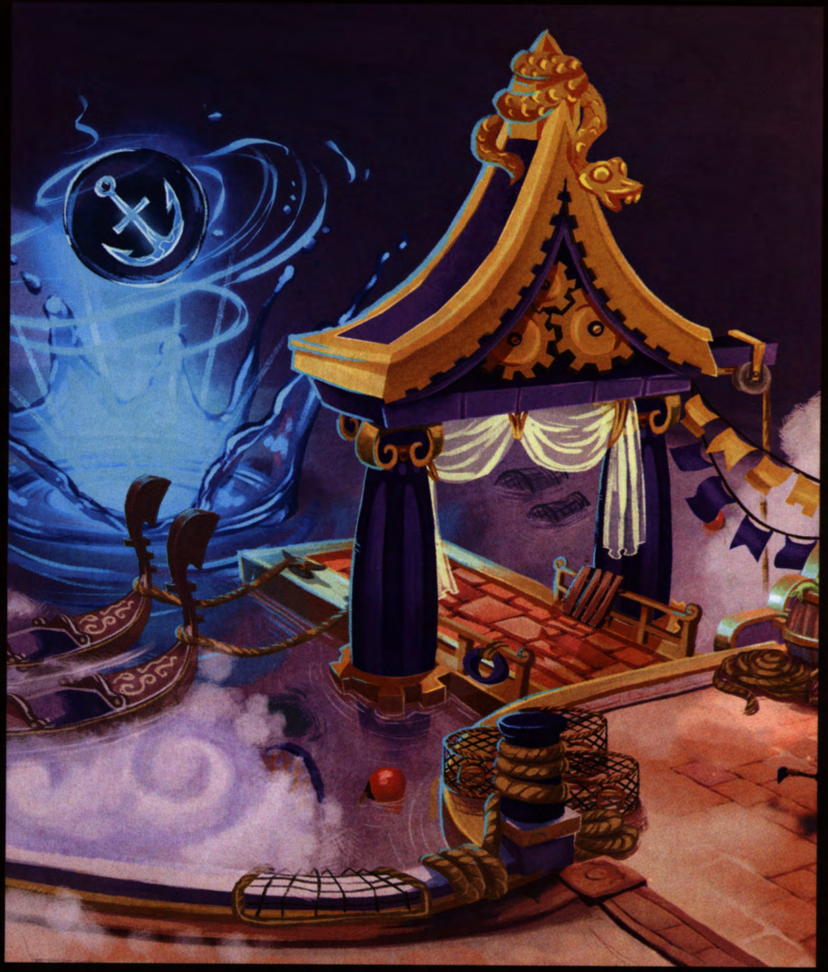


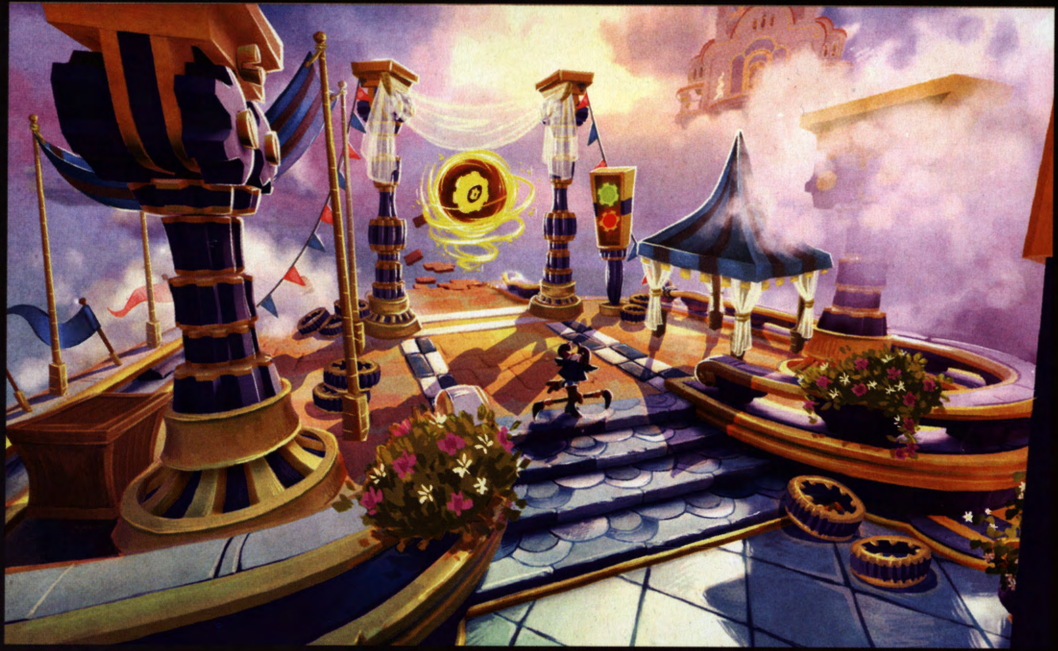


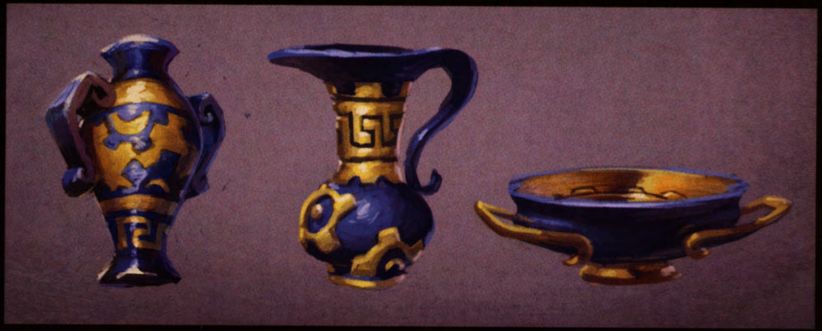


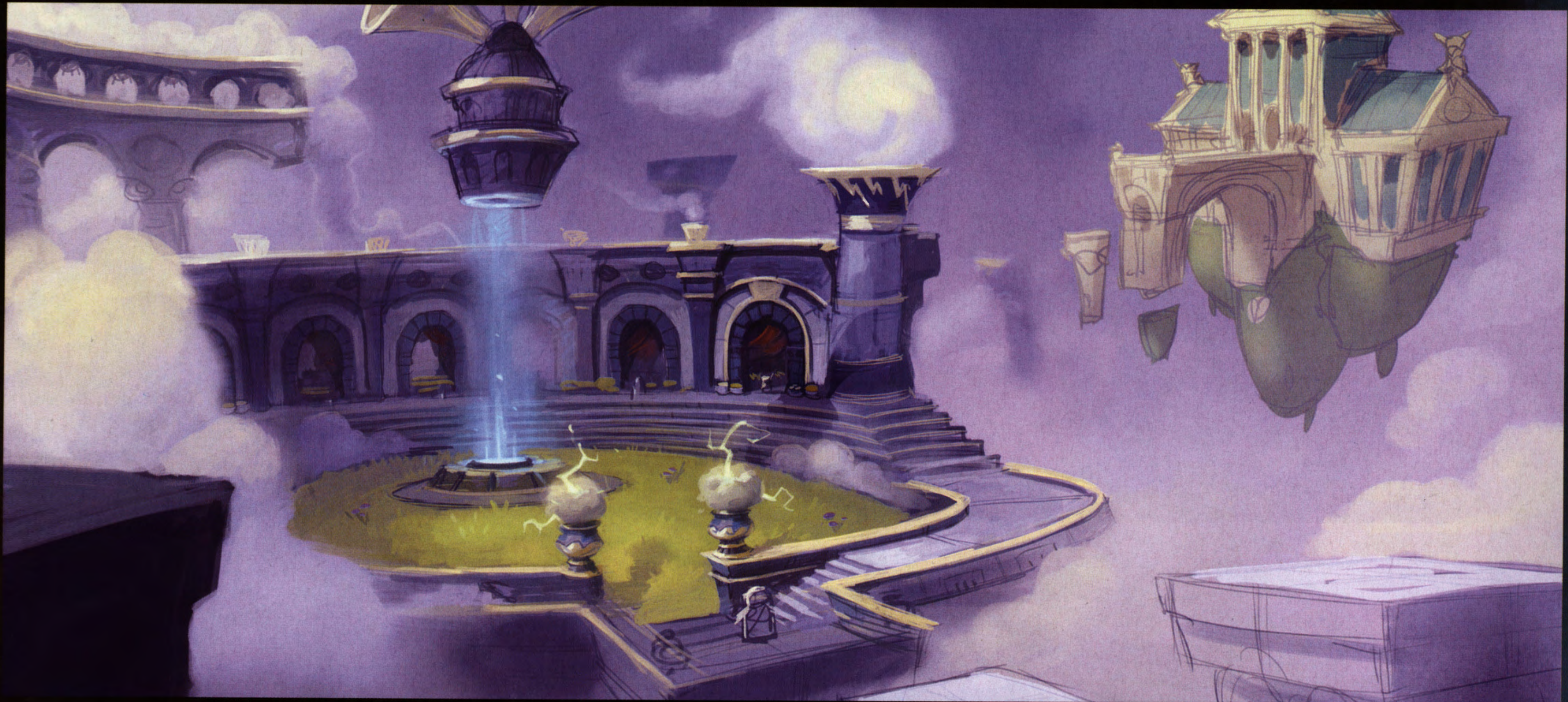


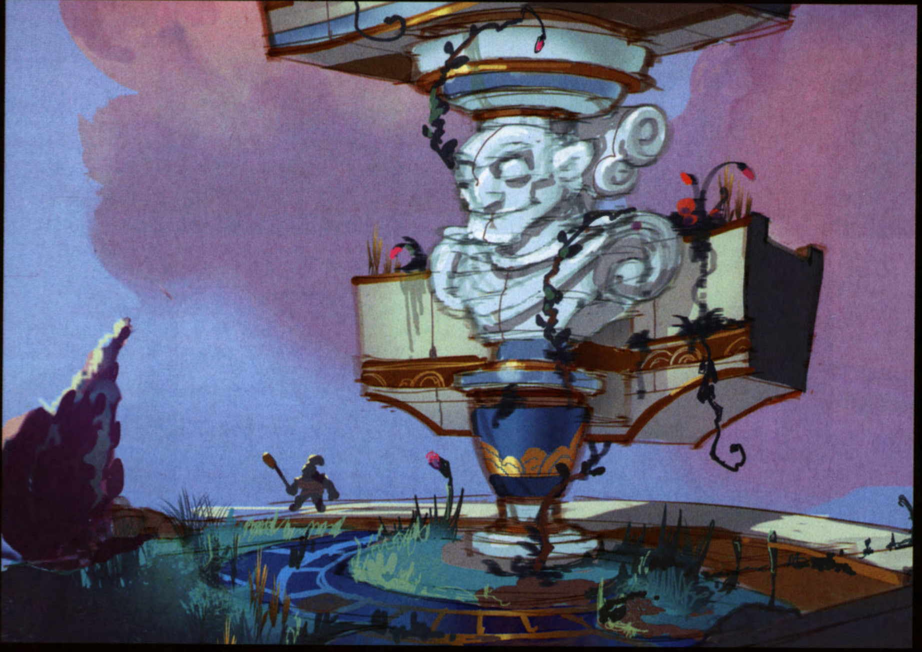


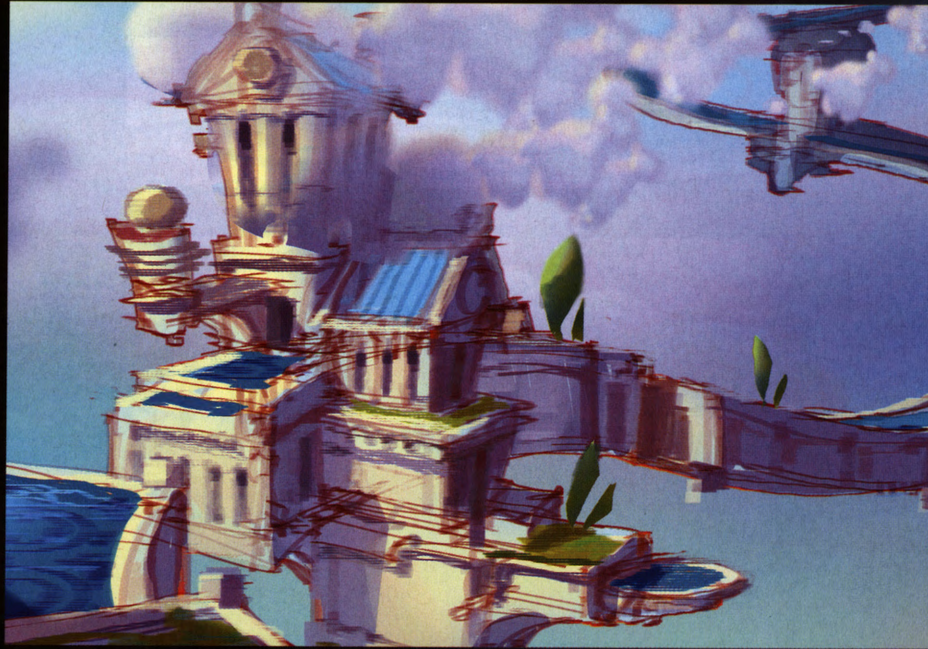


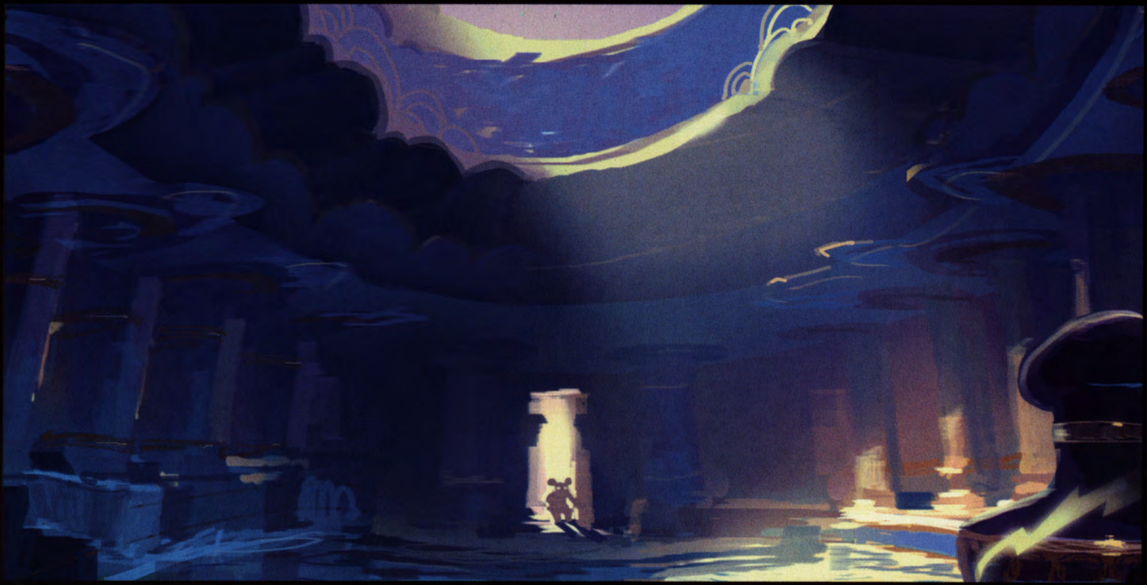


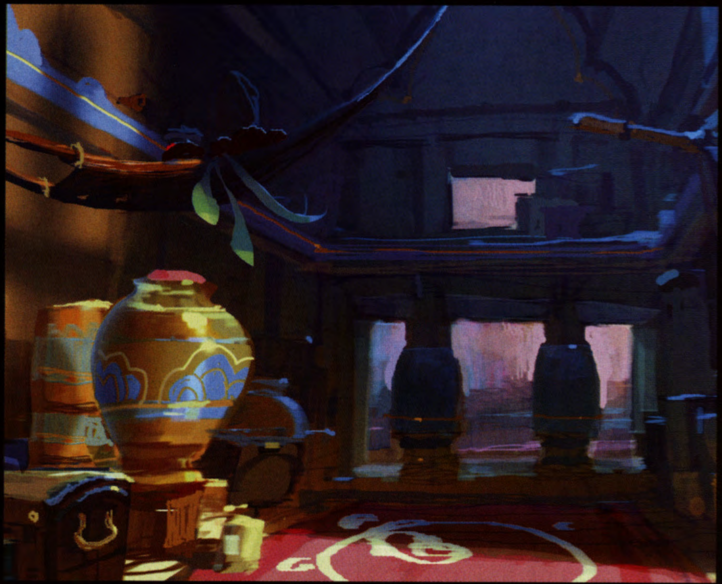


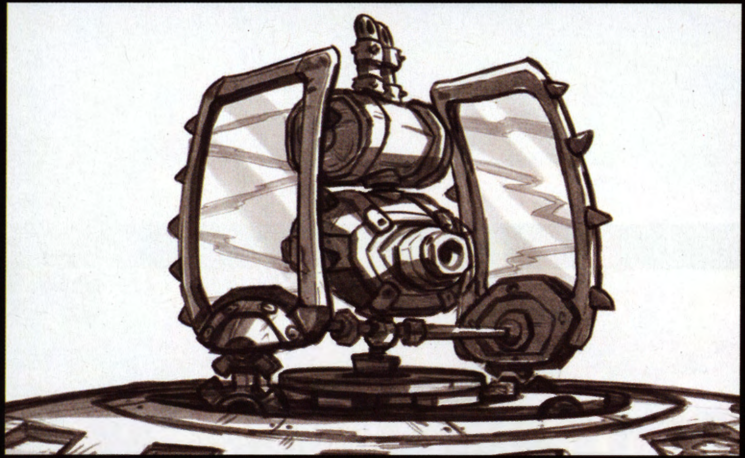


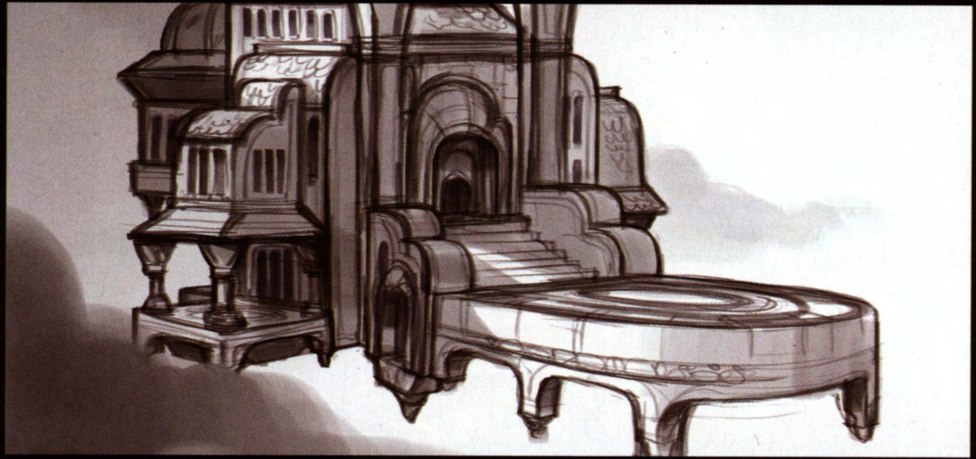


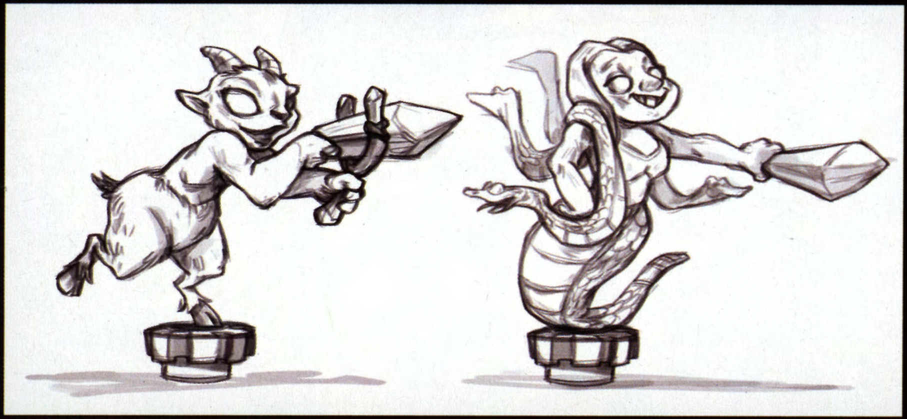


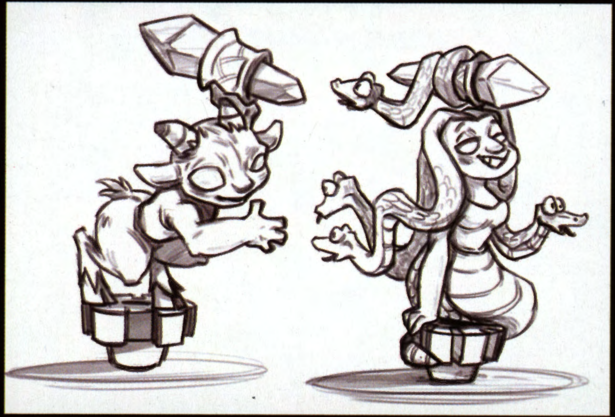


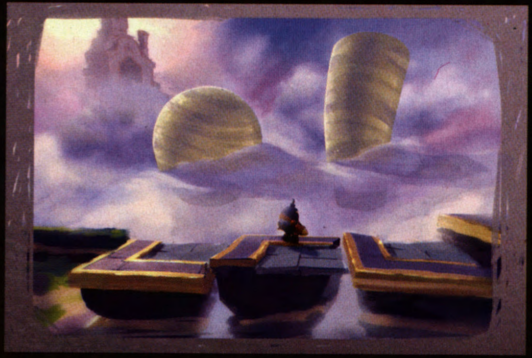


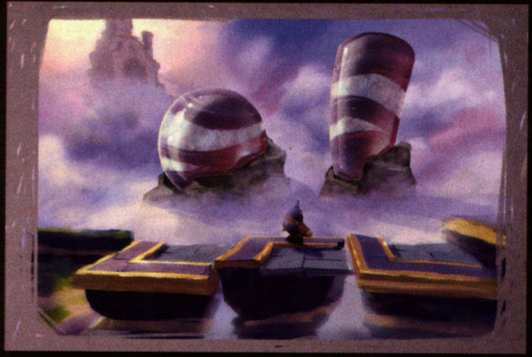


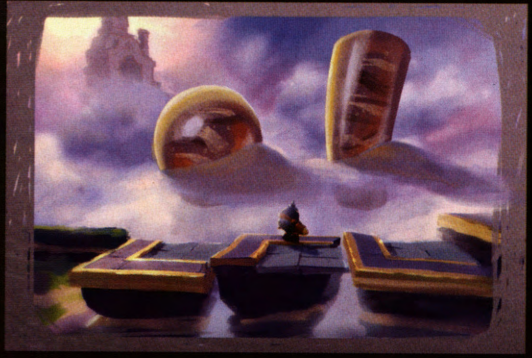


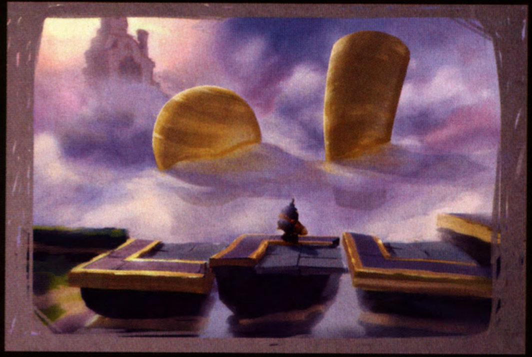


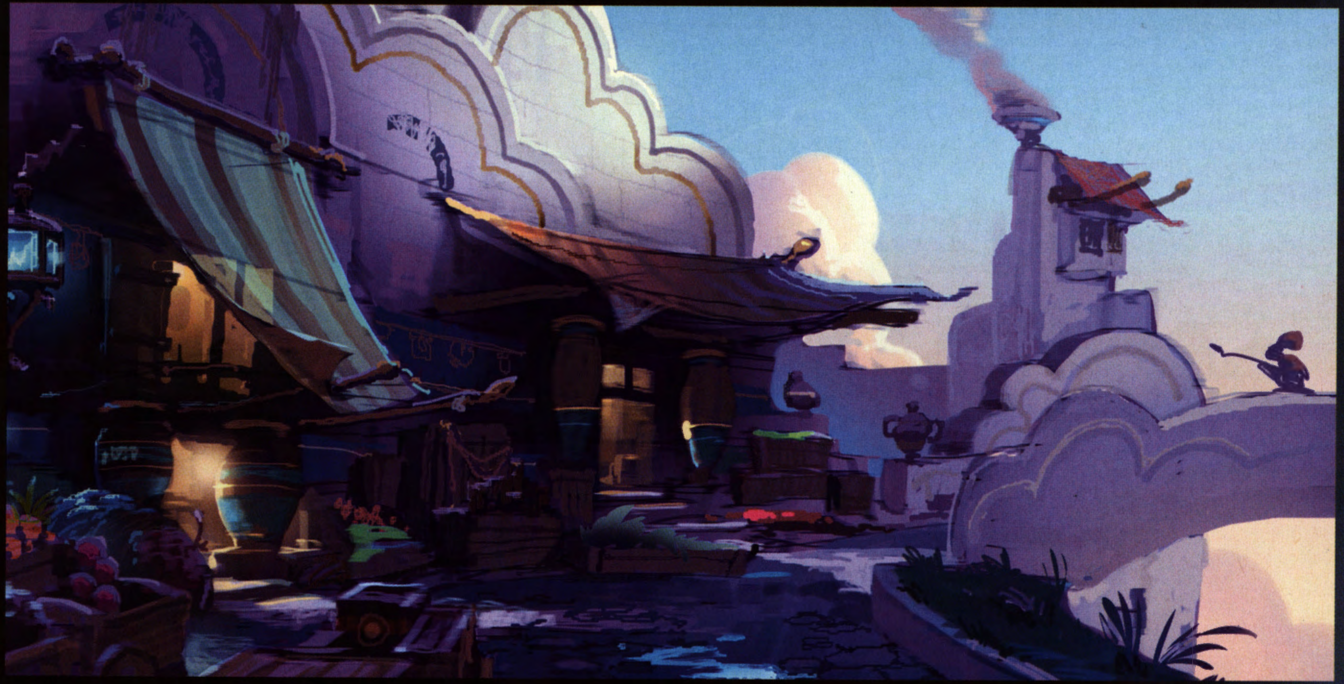


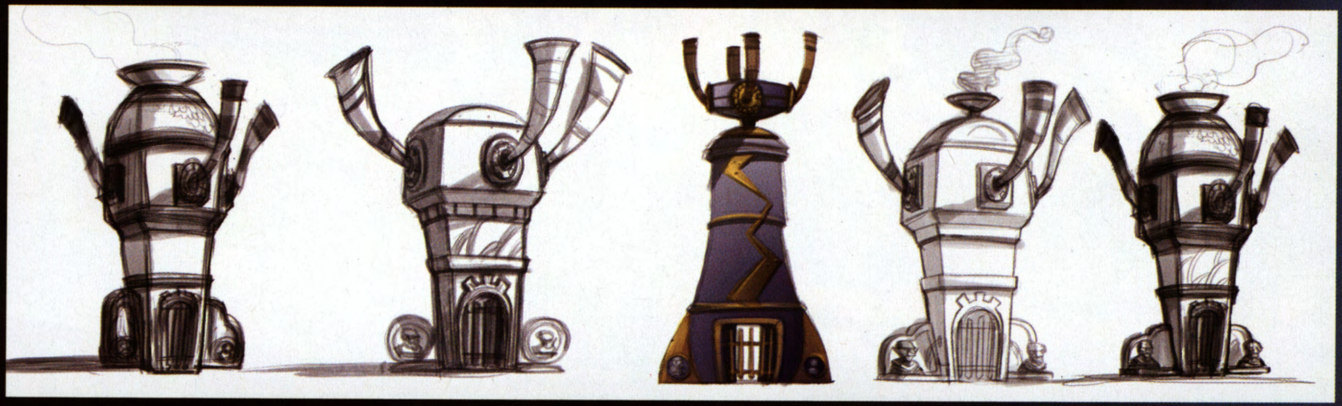




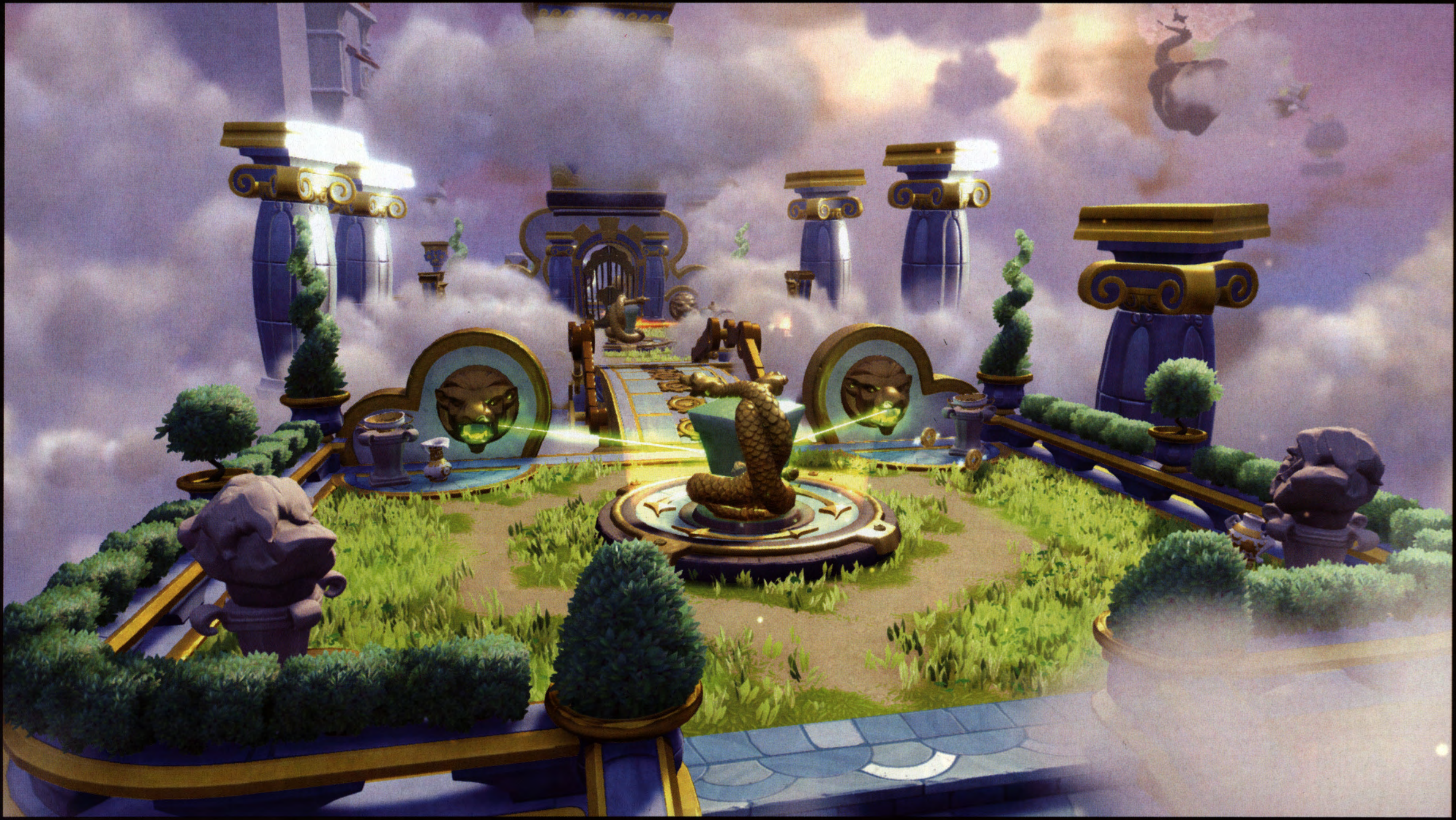


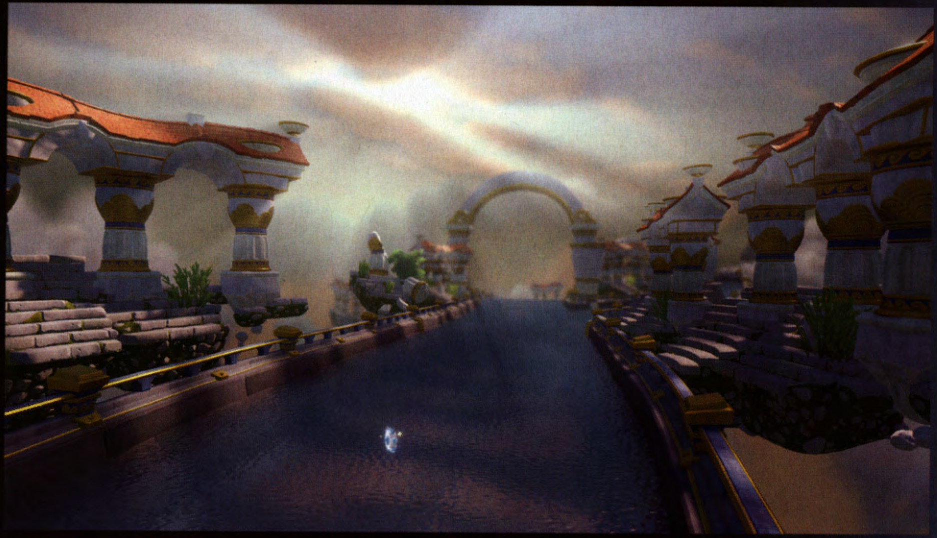






SCREENSHOTS

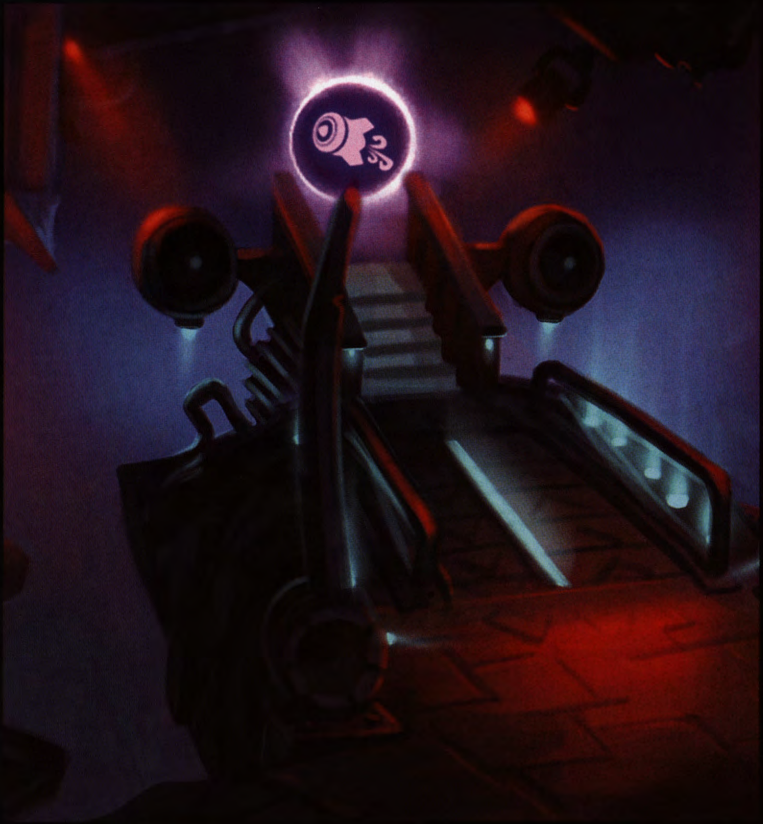


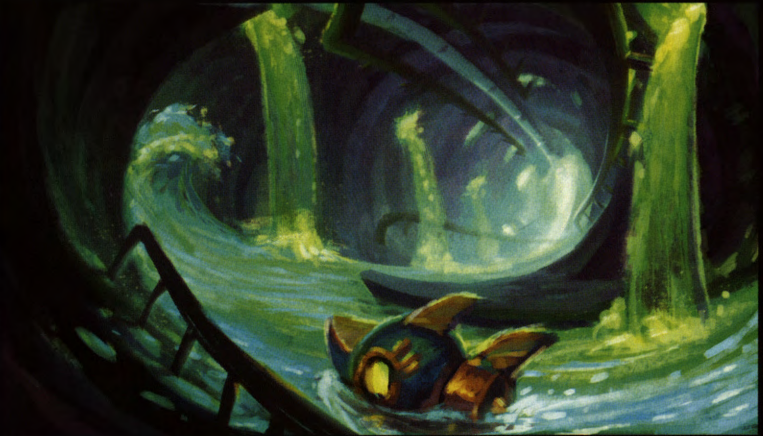


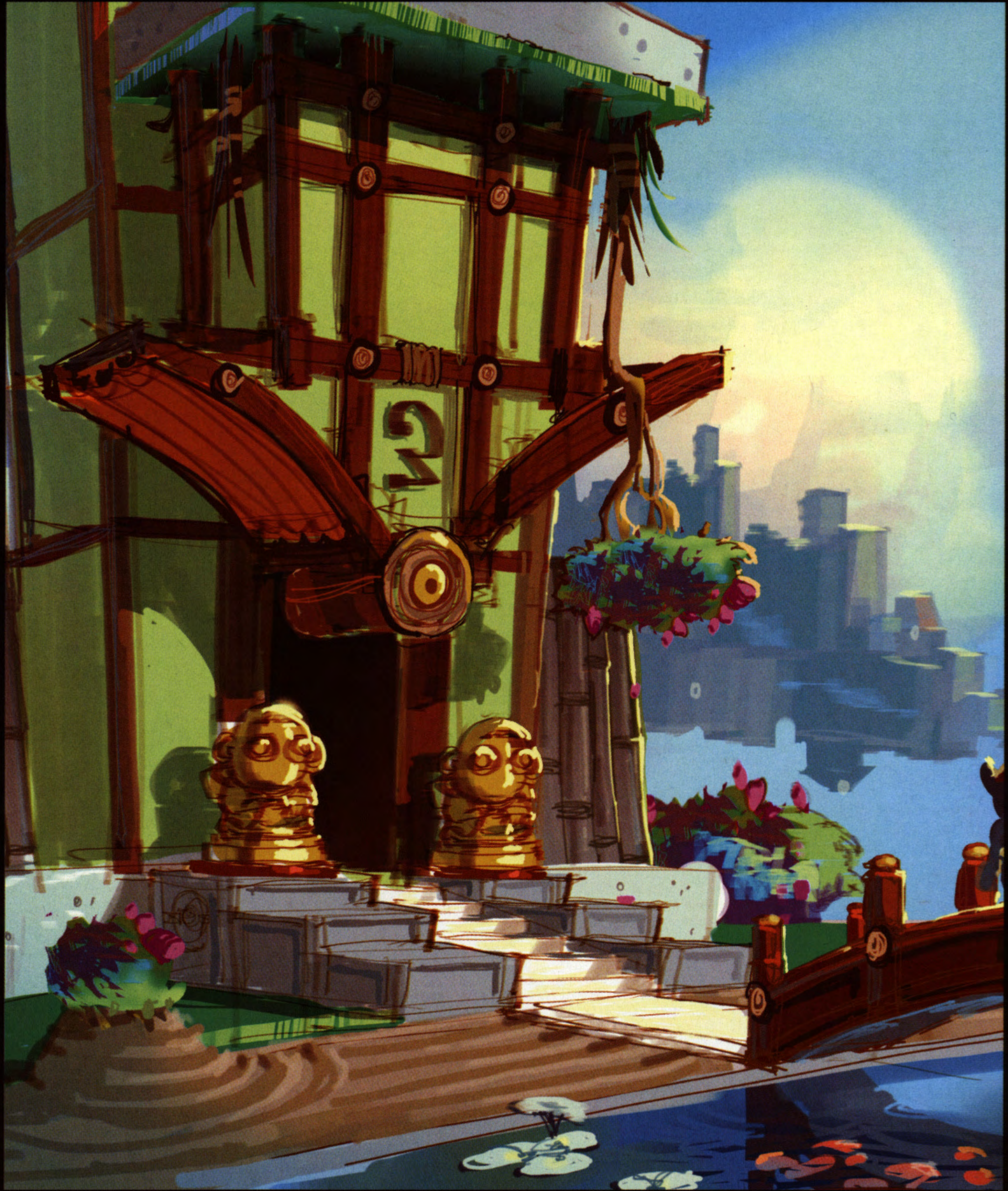
I still can't believe how cool the clouds are in the Cloud Kingdom. It's just fun to run and push the clouds back.

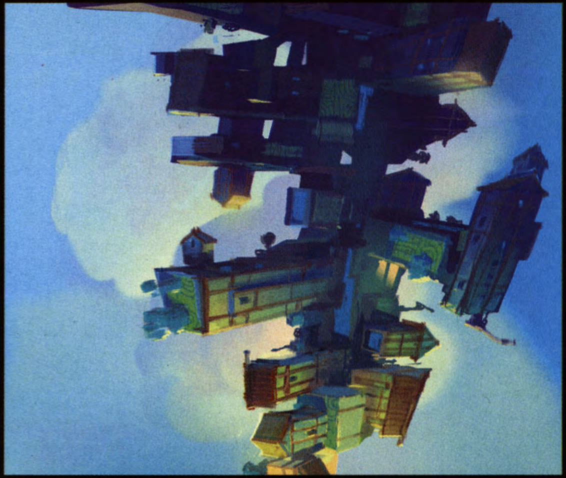
– Lucas Wells

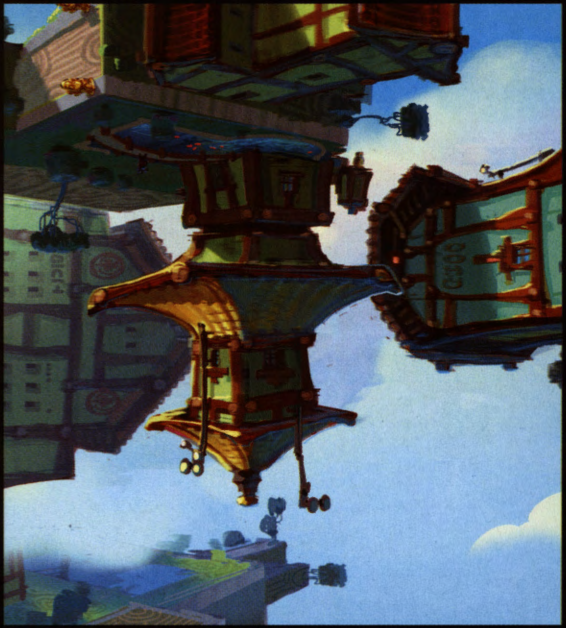
LAND OF THE UNDEAD

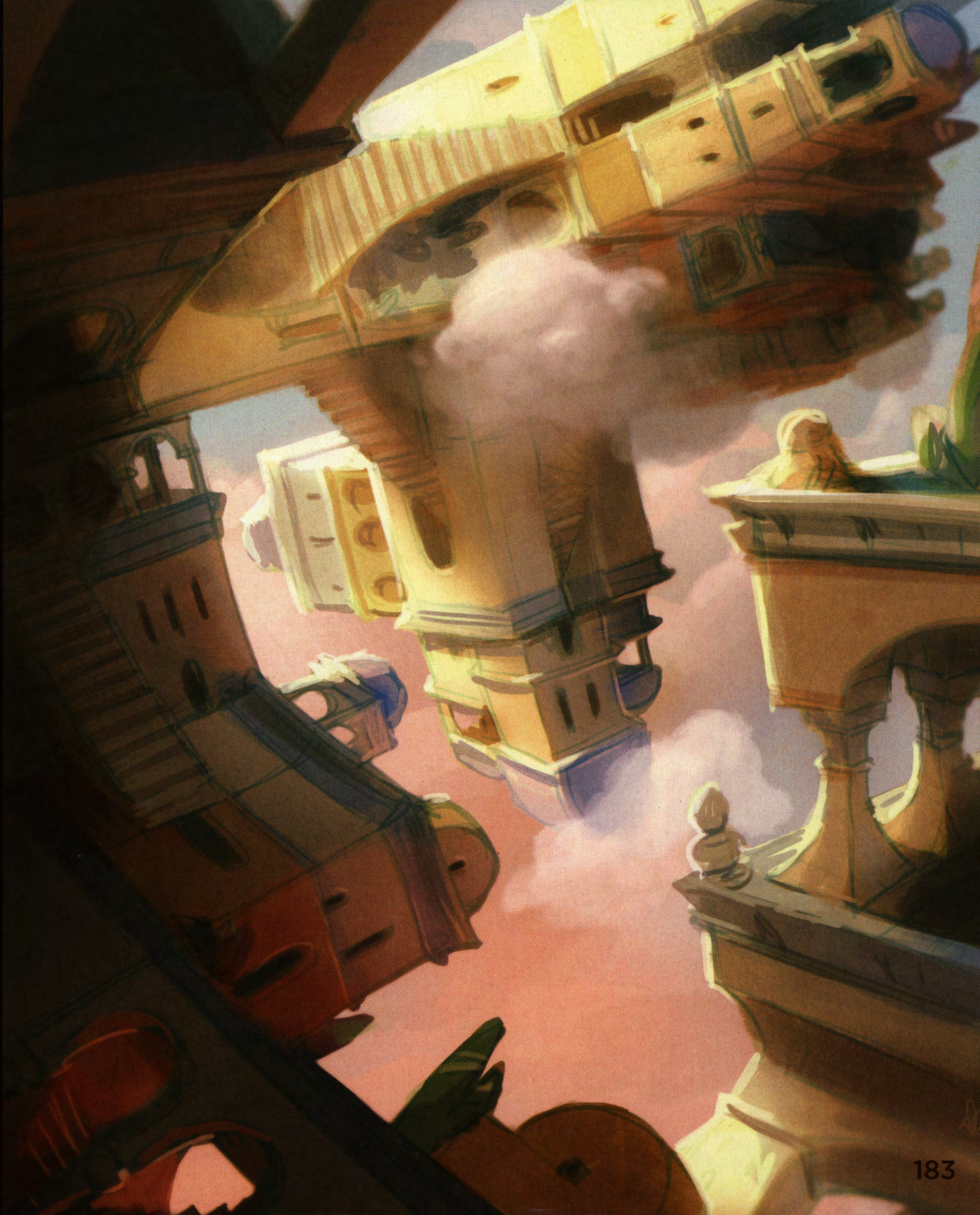






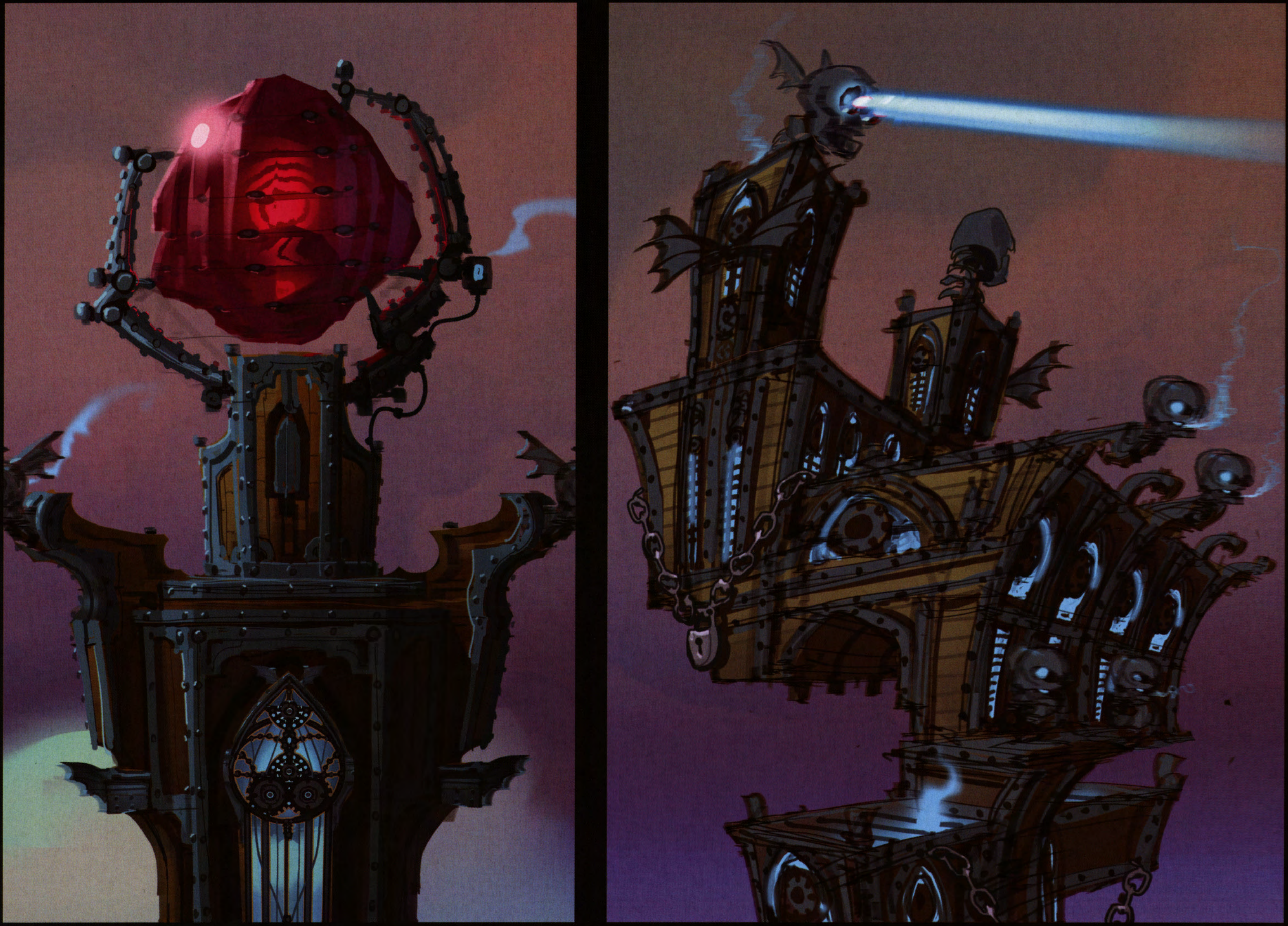






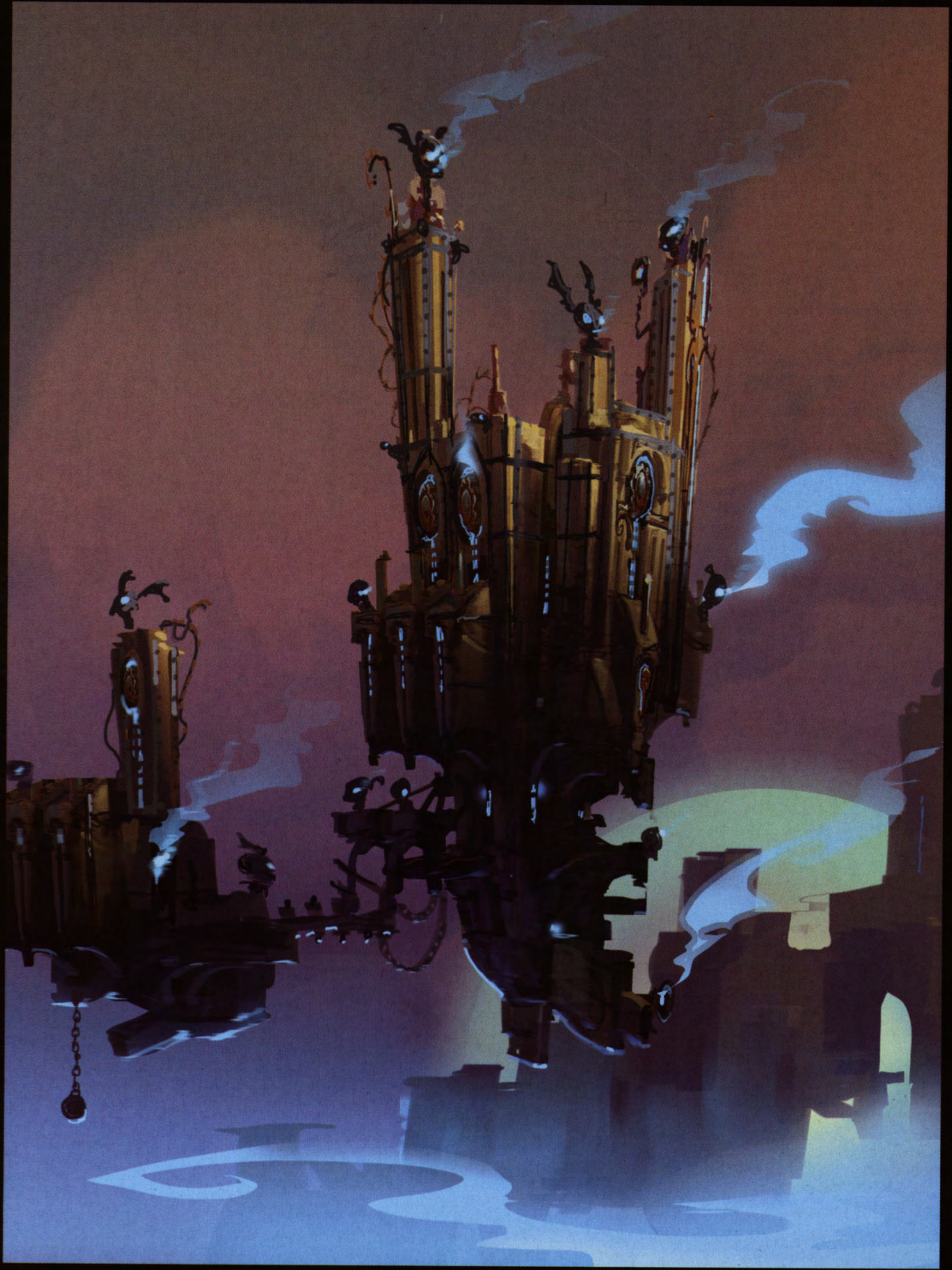
This whole level started as an Escher-style Zen garden.

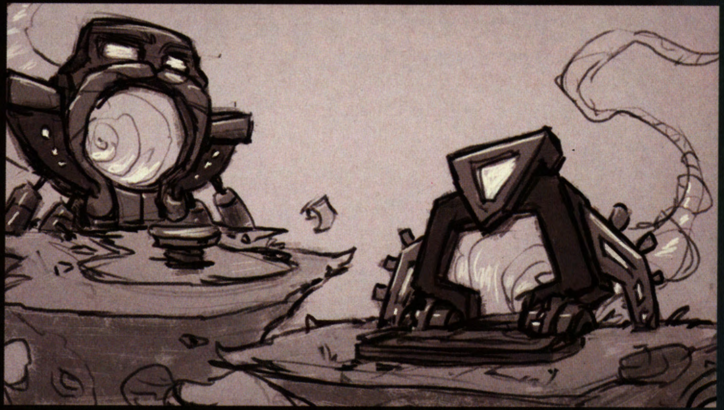
– Buck Chantel

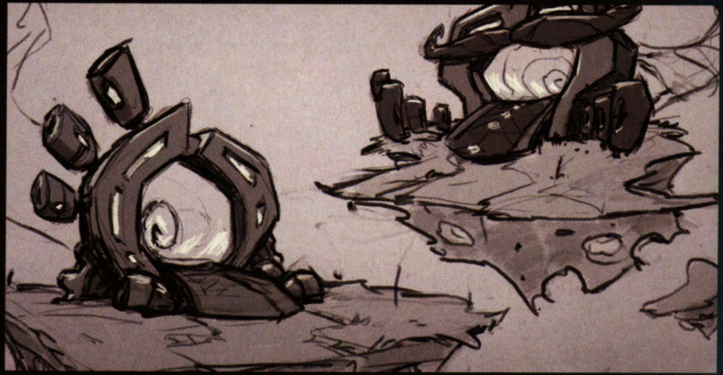


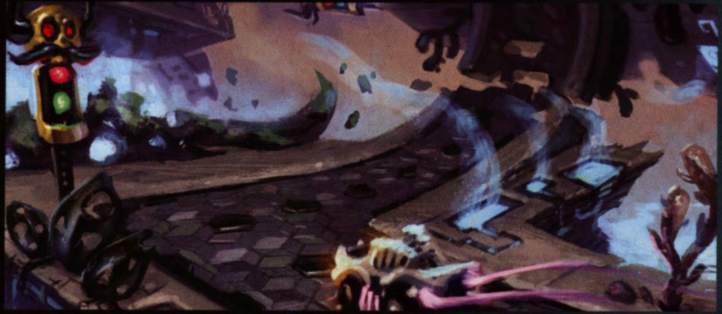
This Undead city is so full of life!

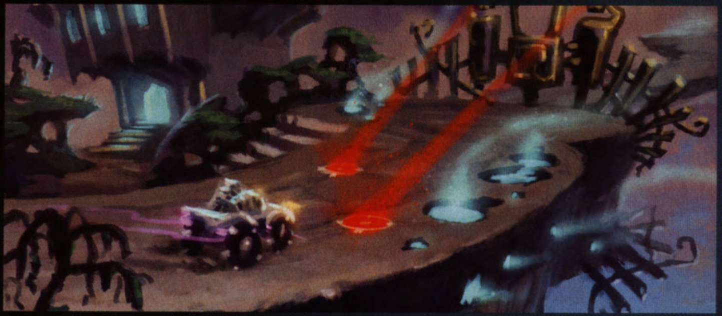
– Devin Knudsen



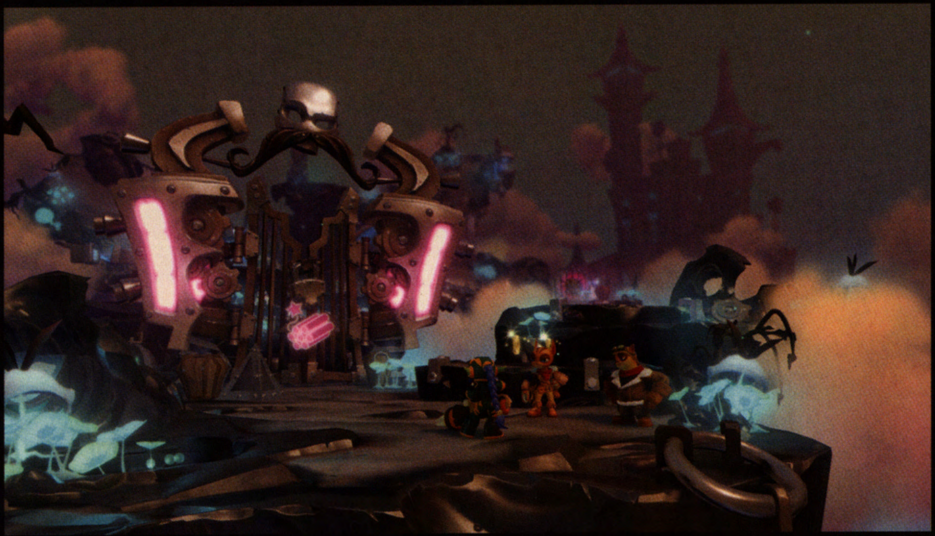


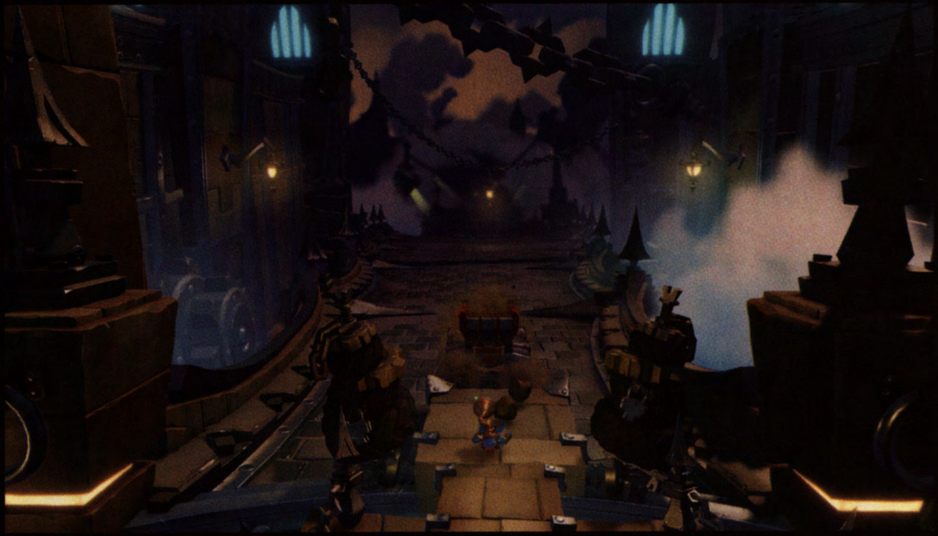


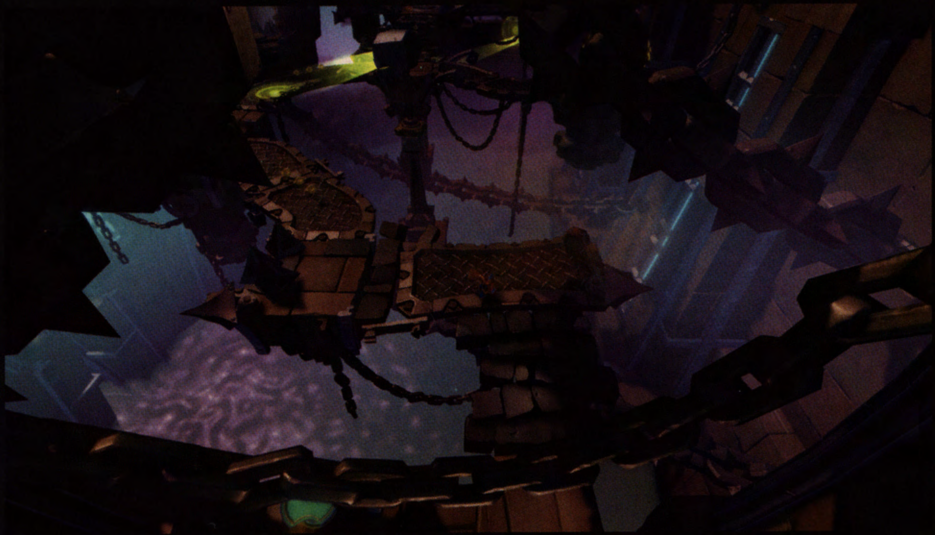


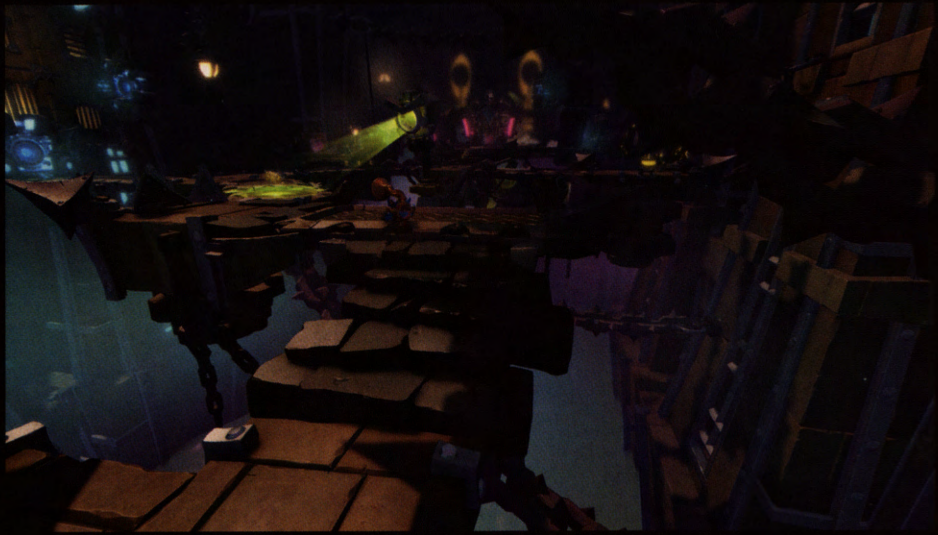


SCREENSHOTS



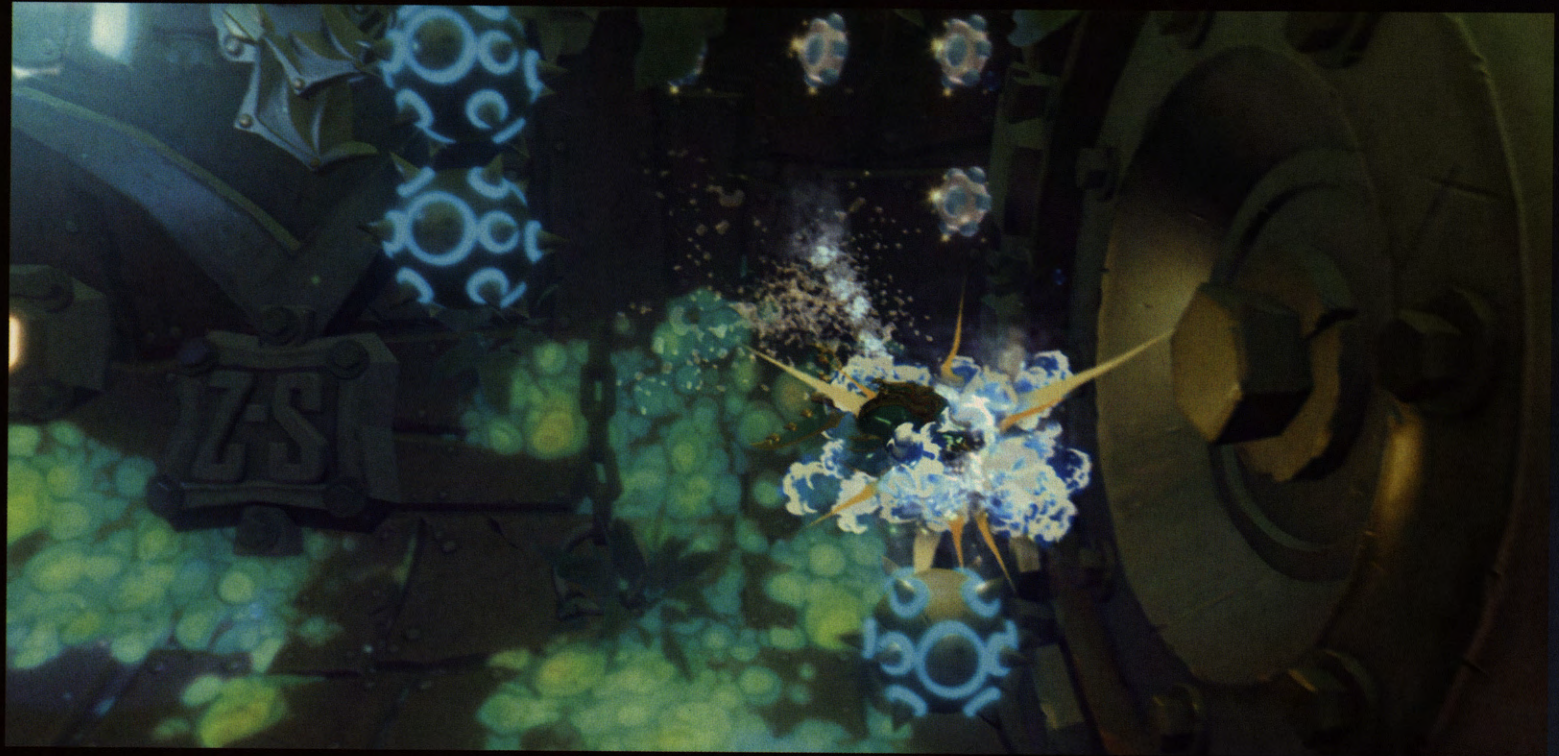




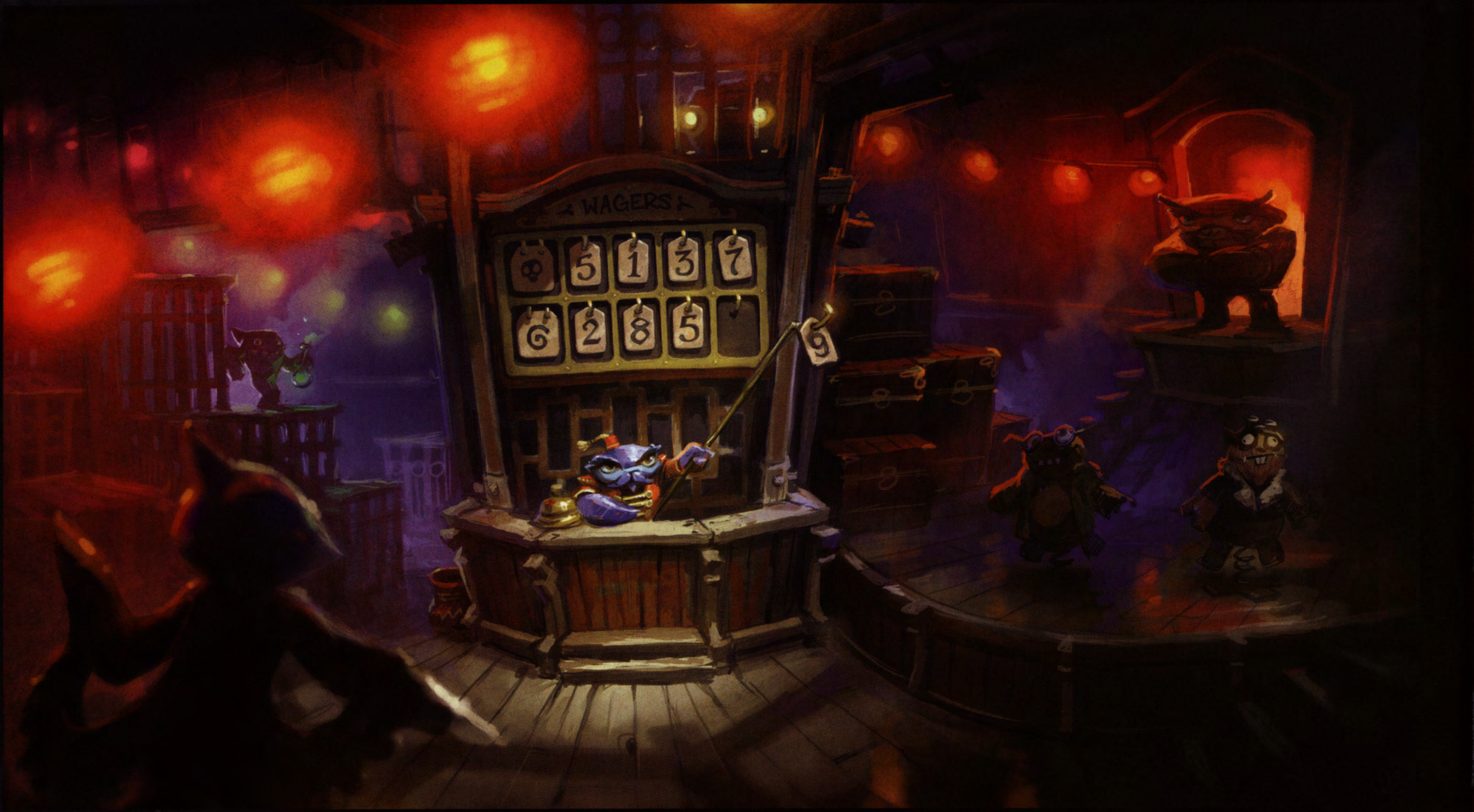


The Land of the Undead is where we really establish how close Kaos is to total victory.

– David A. Rodriguez

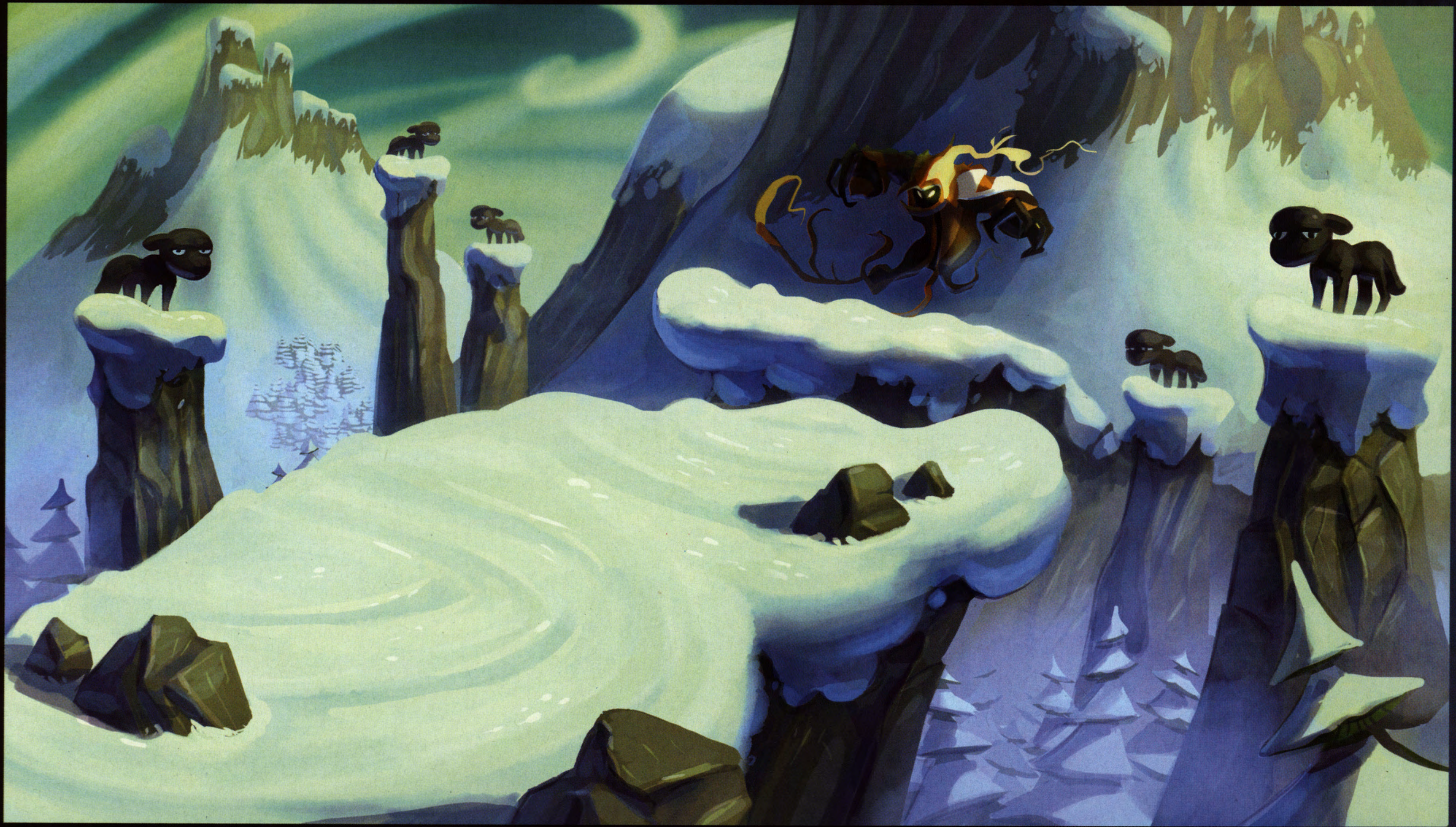

Z-S

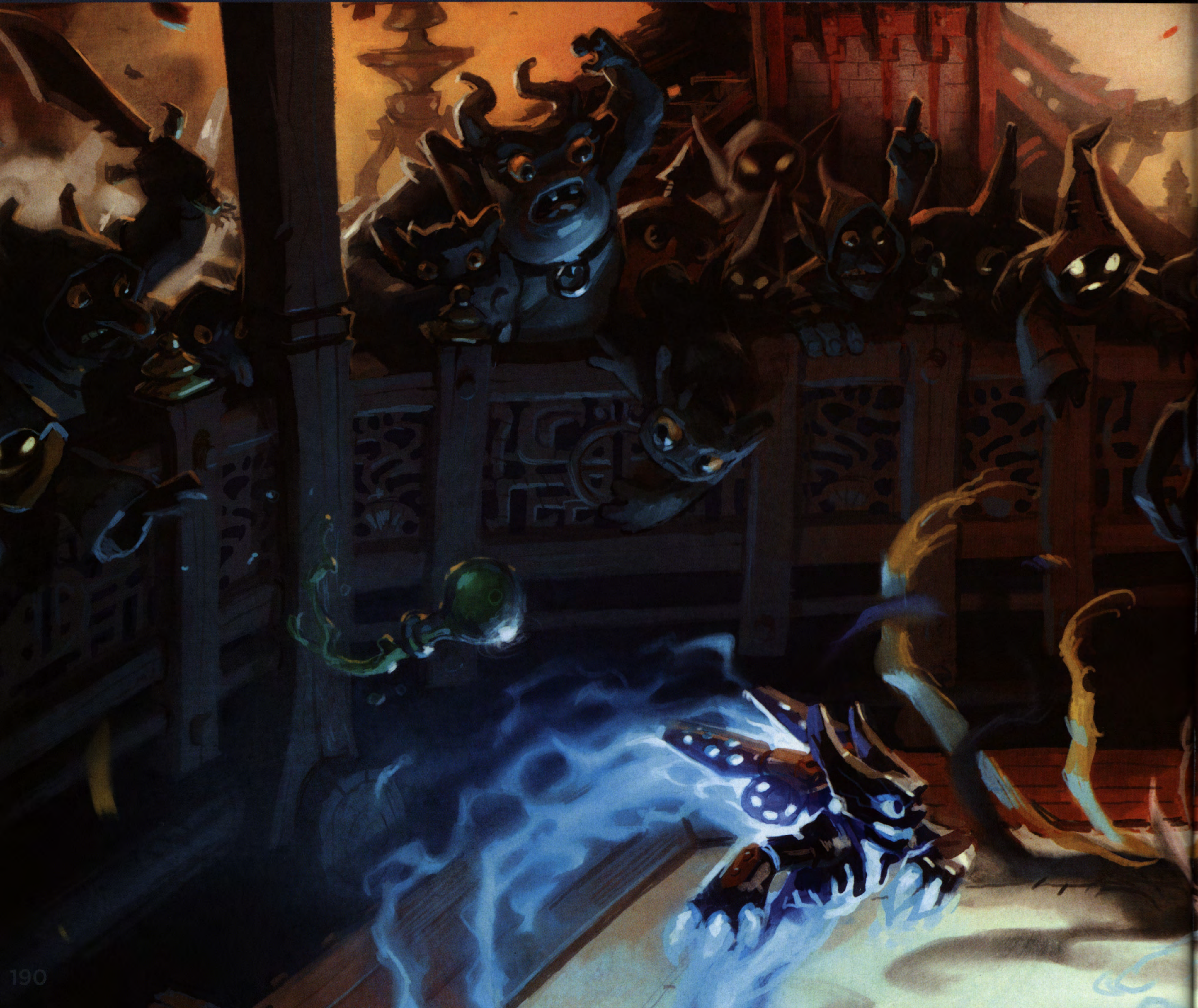
BATTLE BRAWL ISLAND

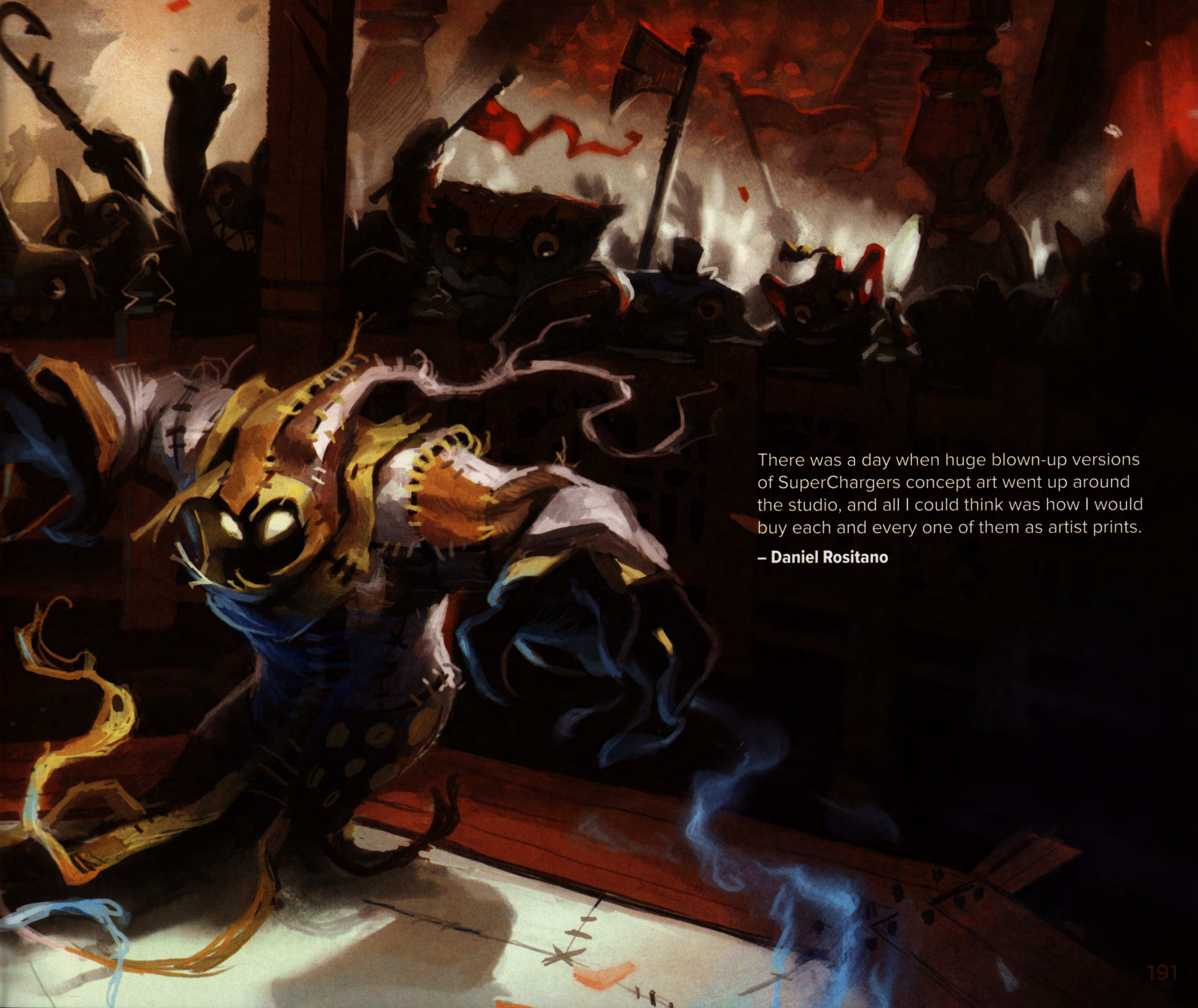


I'd see this arena on screens around the office and couldn't tell if I was looking at this piece of art or the in-game assets.

– John Paul Rhinemiller



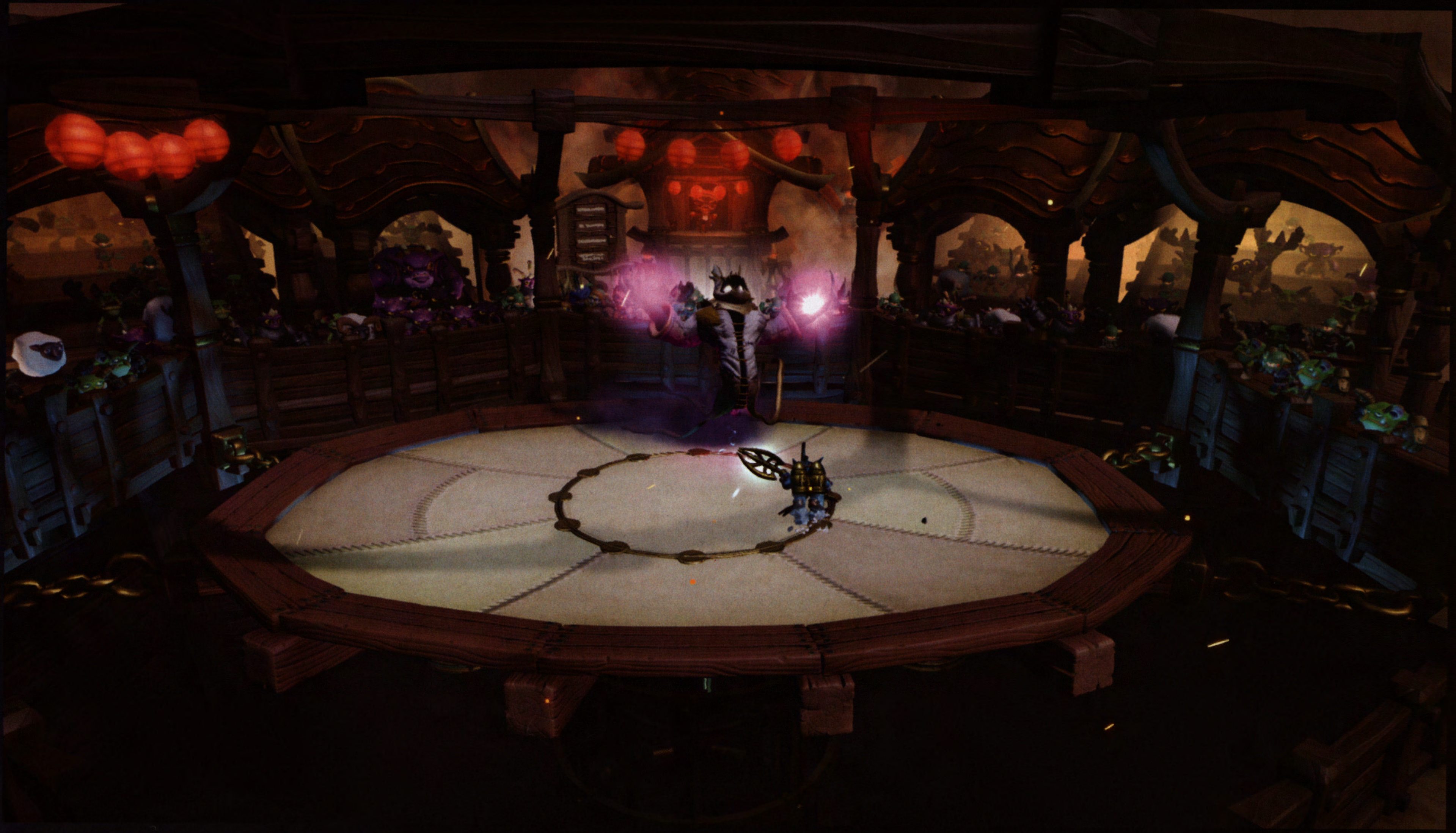




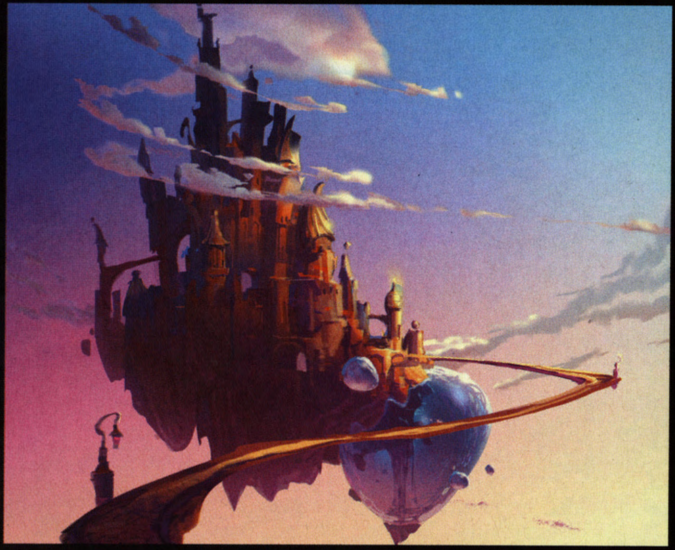
There was a day when huge blown-up versions of SuperChargers concept art went up around the studio, and all I could think was how I would buy each and every one of them as artist prints.

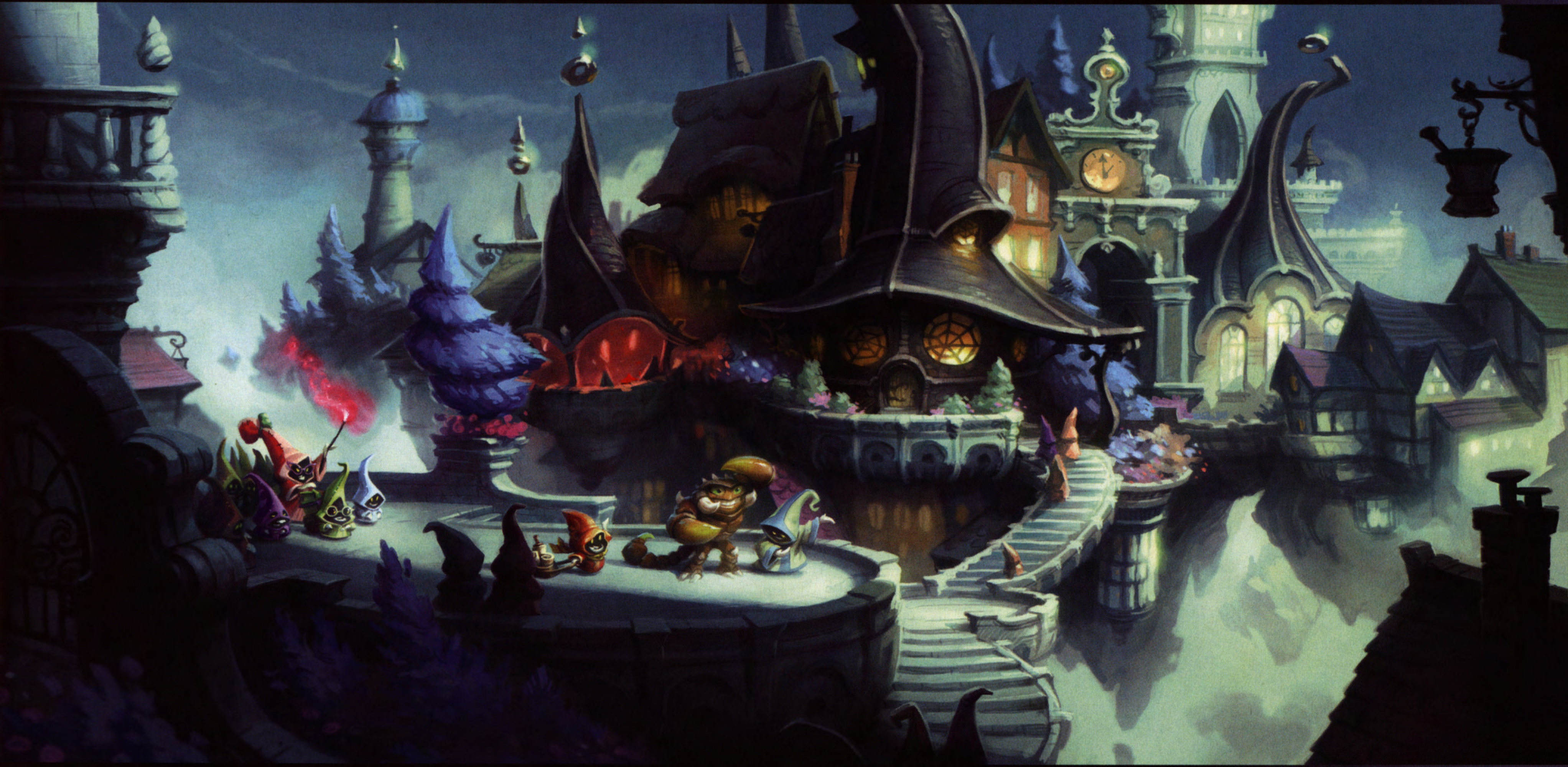
– Daniel Rositano

SCREENSHOTS



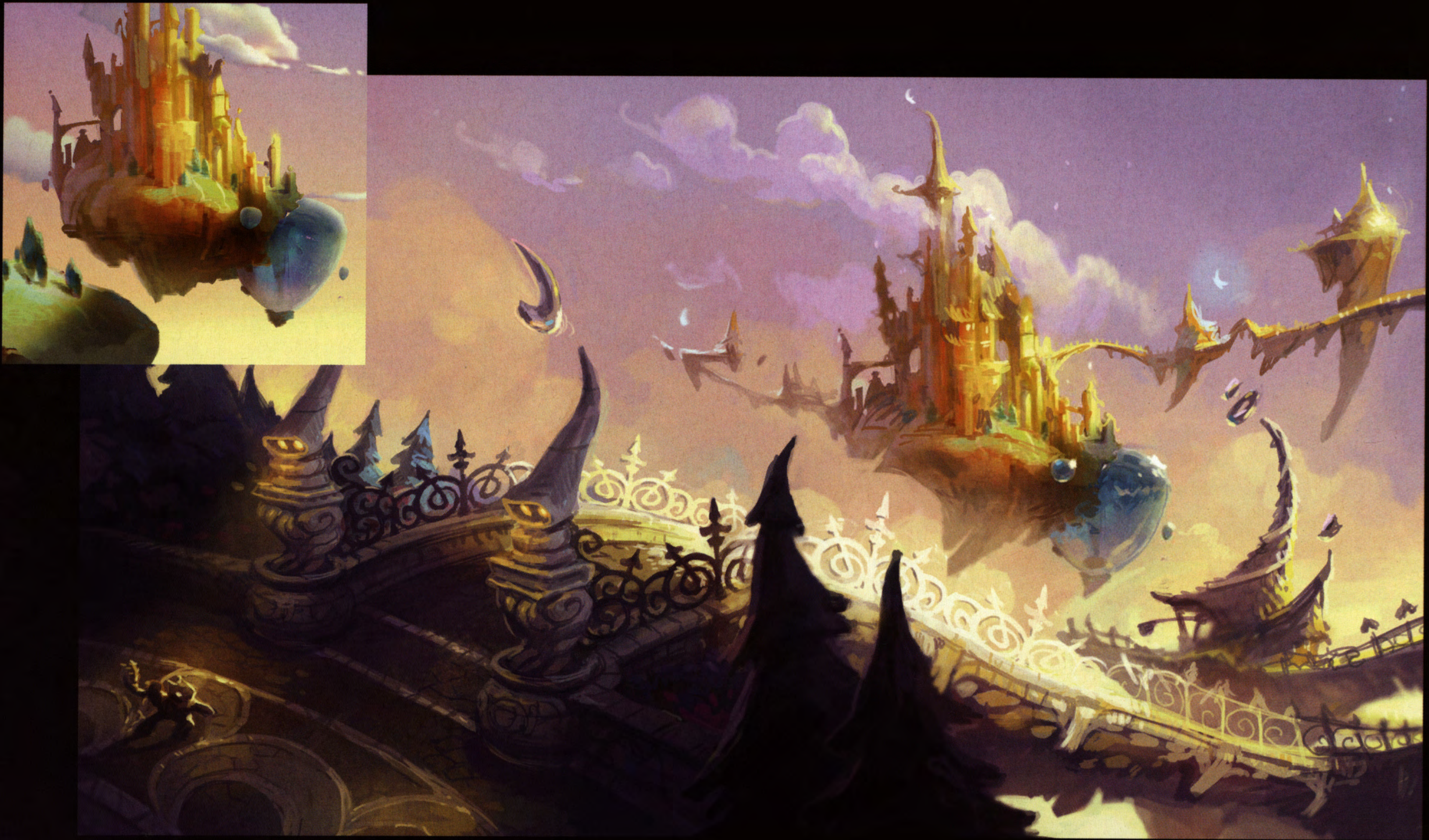
THE SPELLPUNK LIBRARY

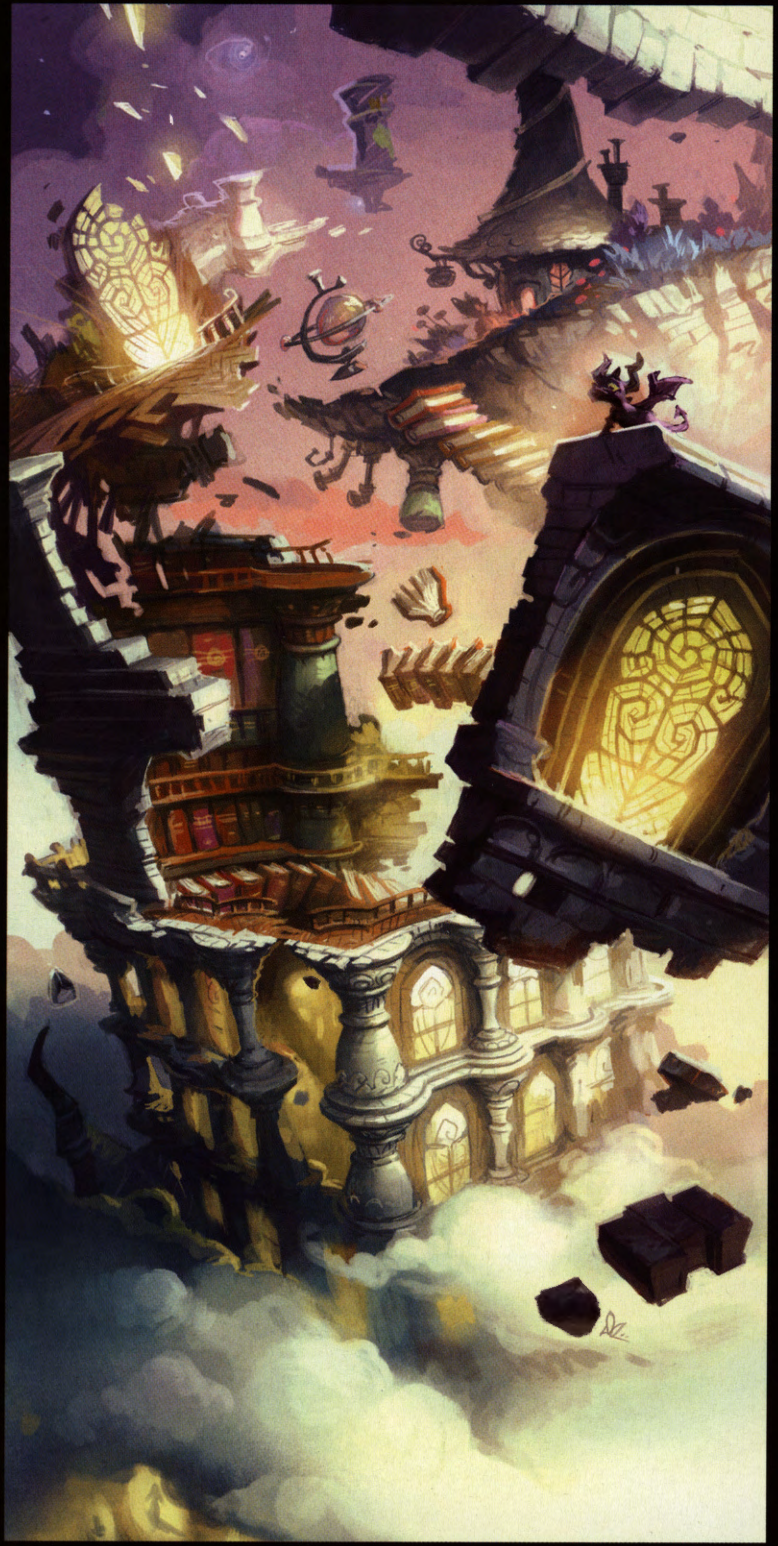


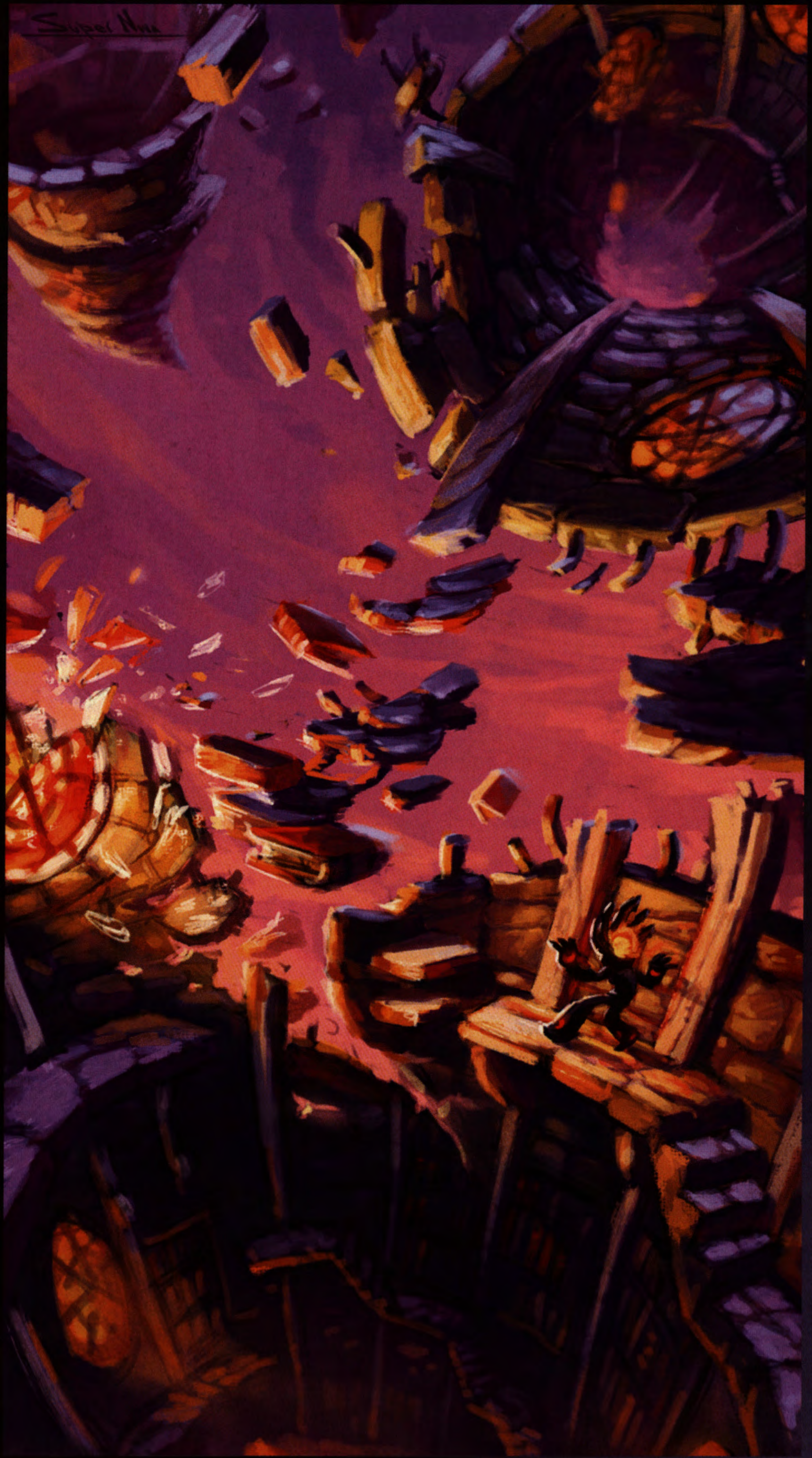


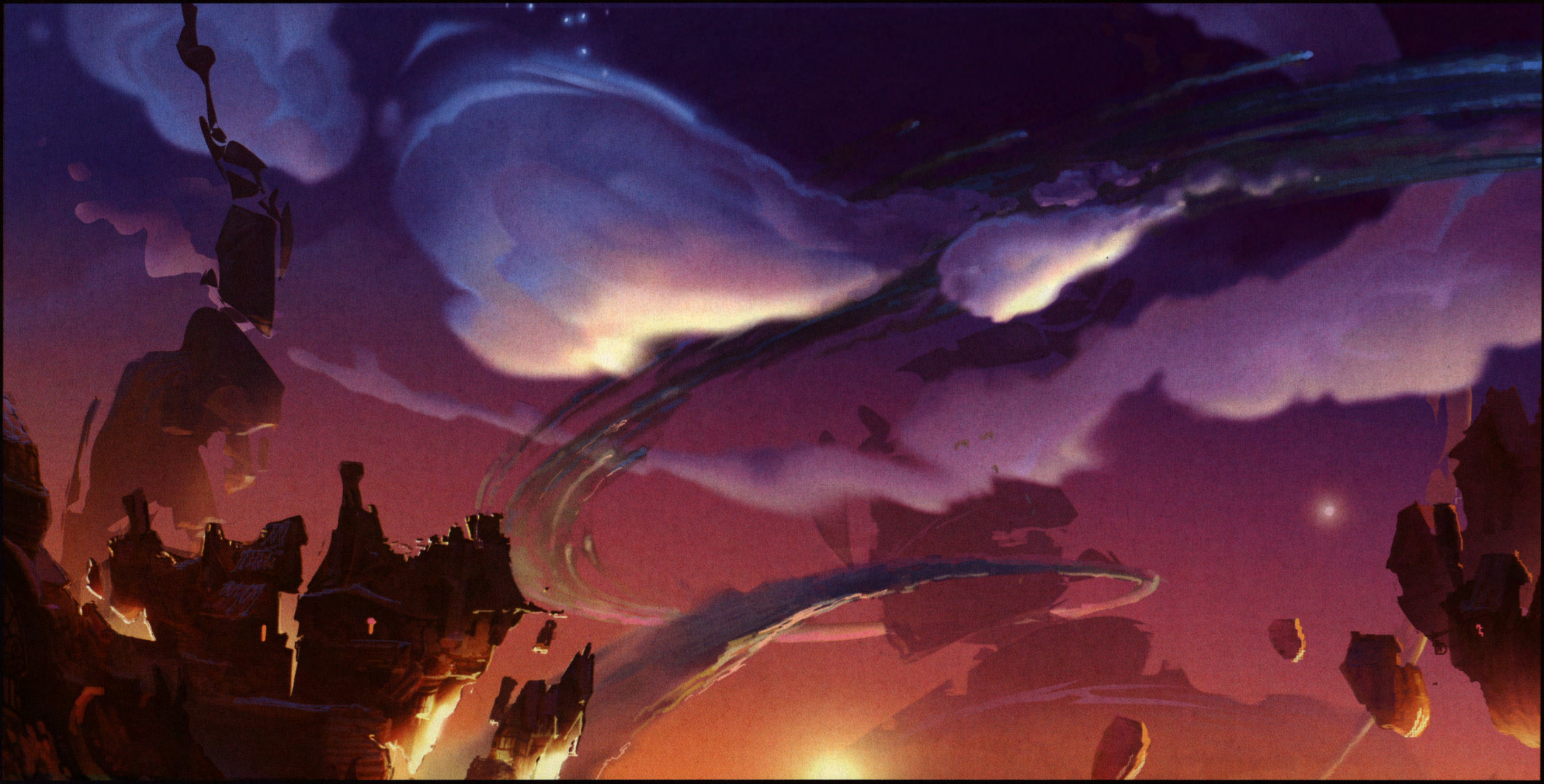
The Spellpunk Library was our sneaky way of doing Skylander time traveling by allowing the player to jump into history books!

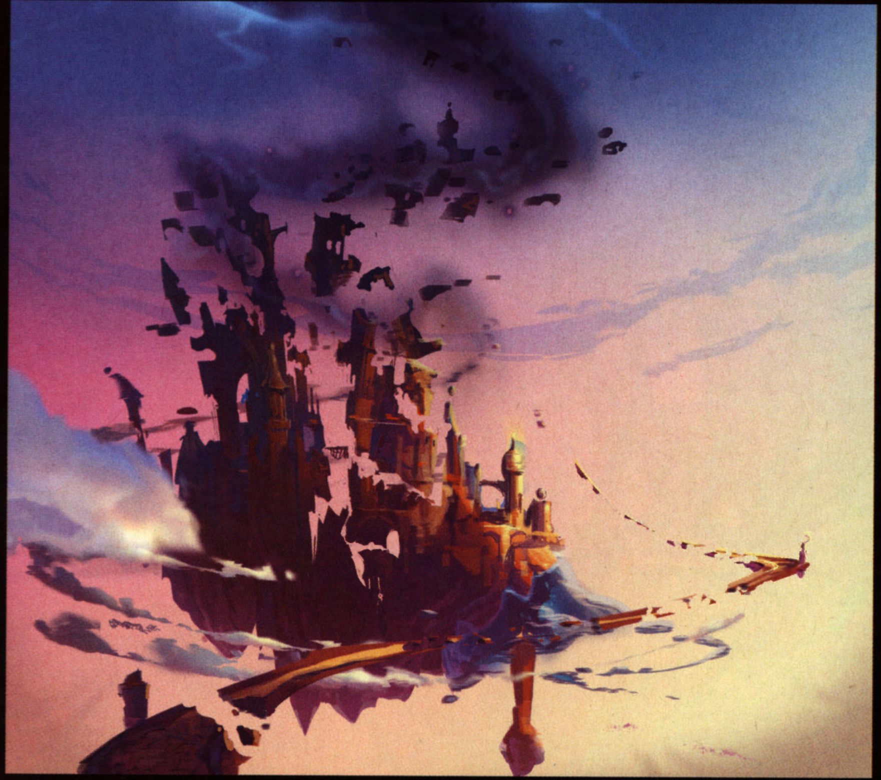
– David A. Rodriguez

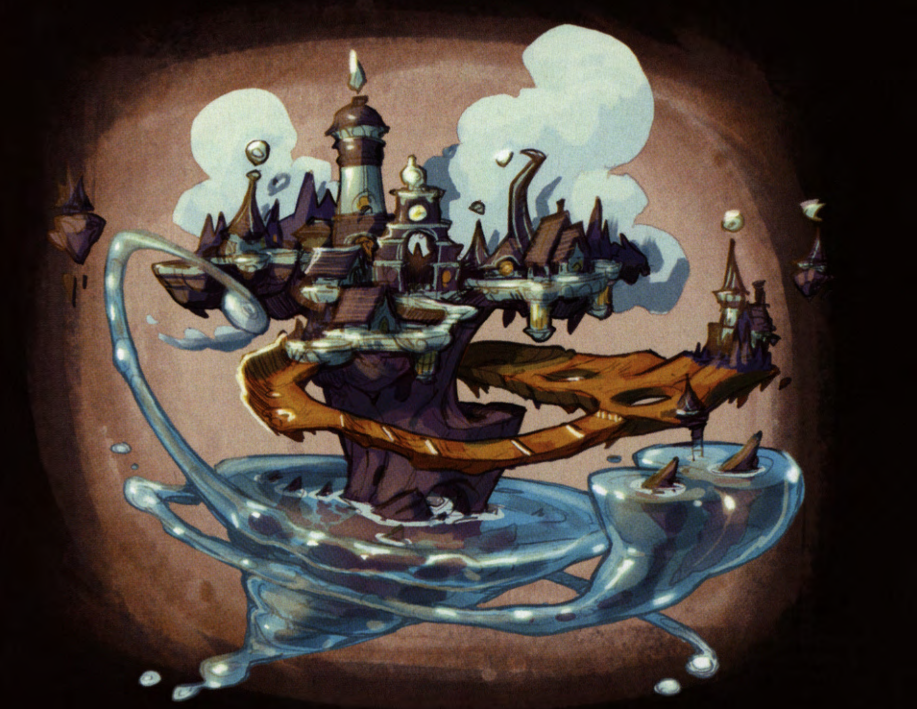


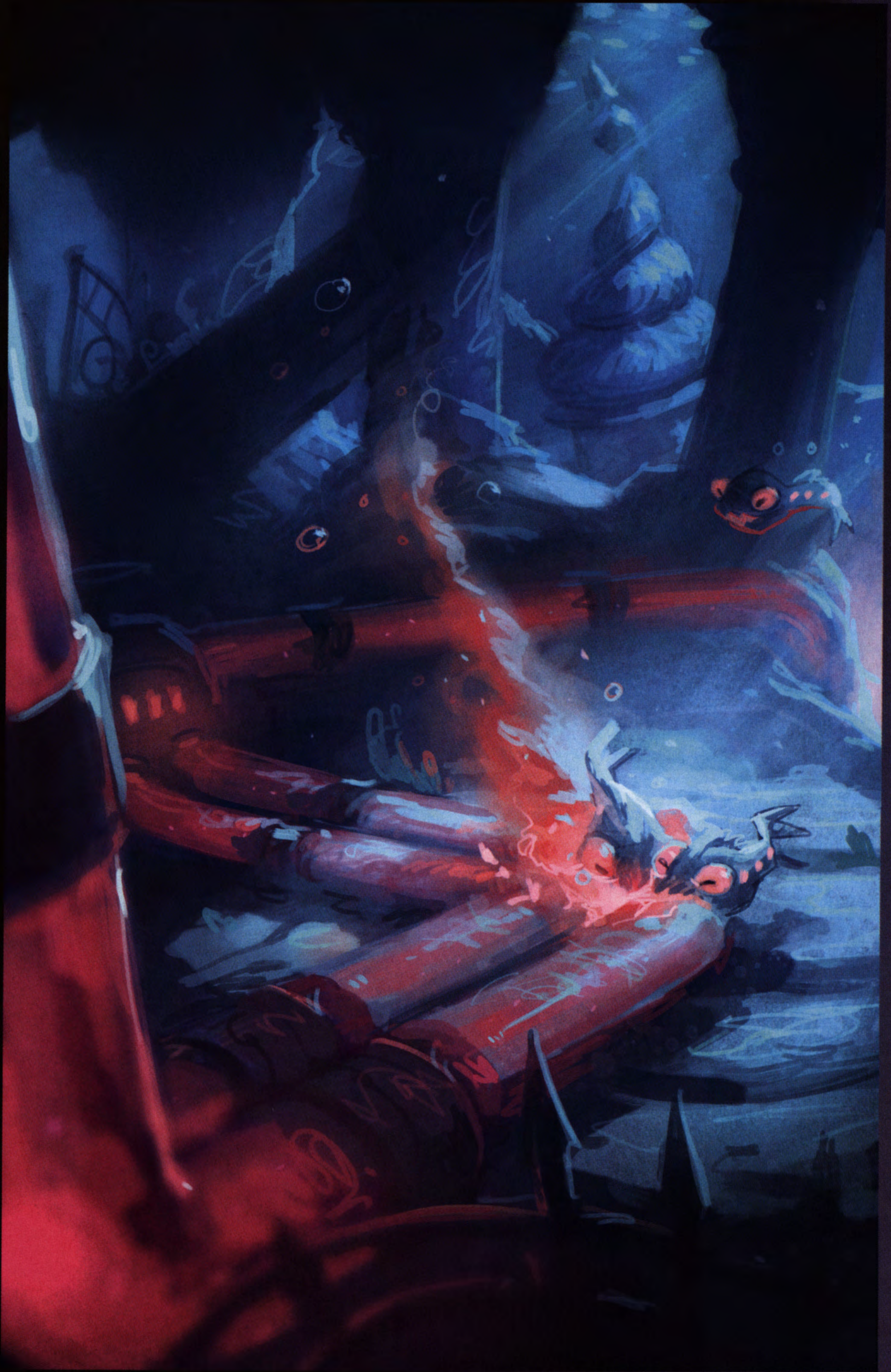



Super Nova

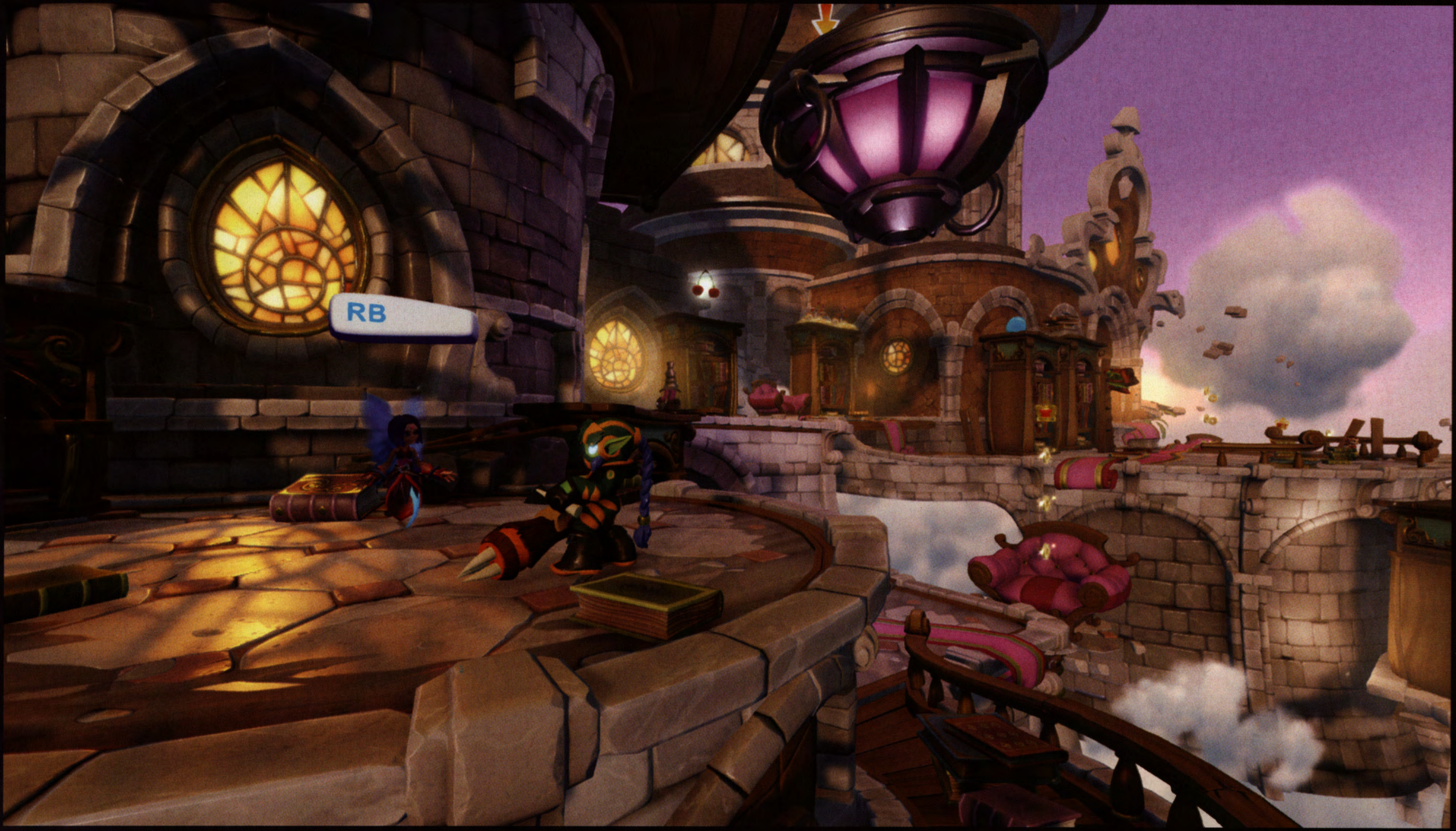


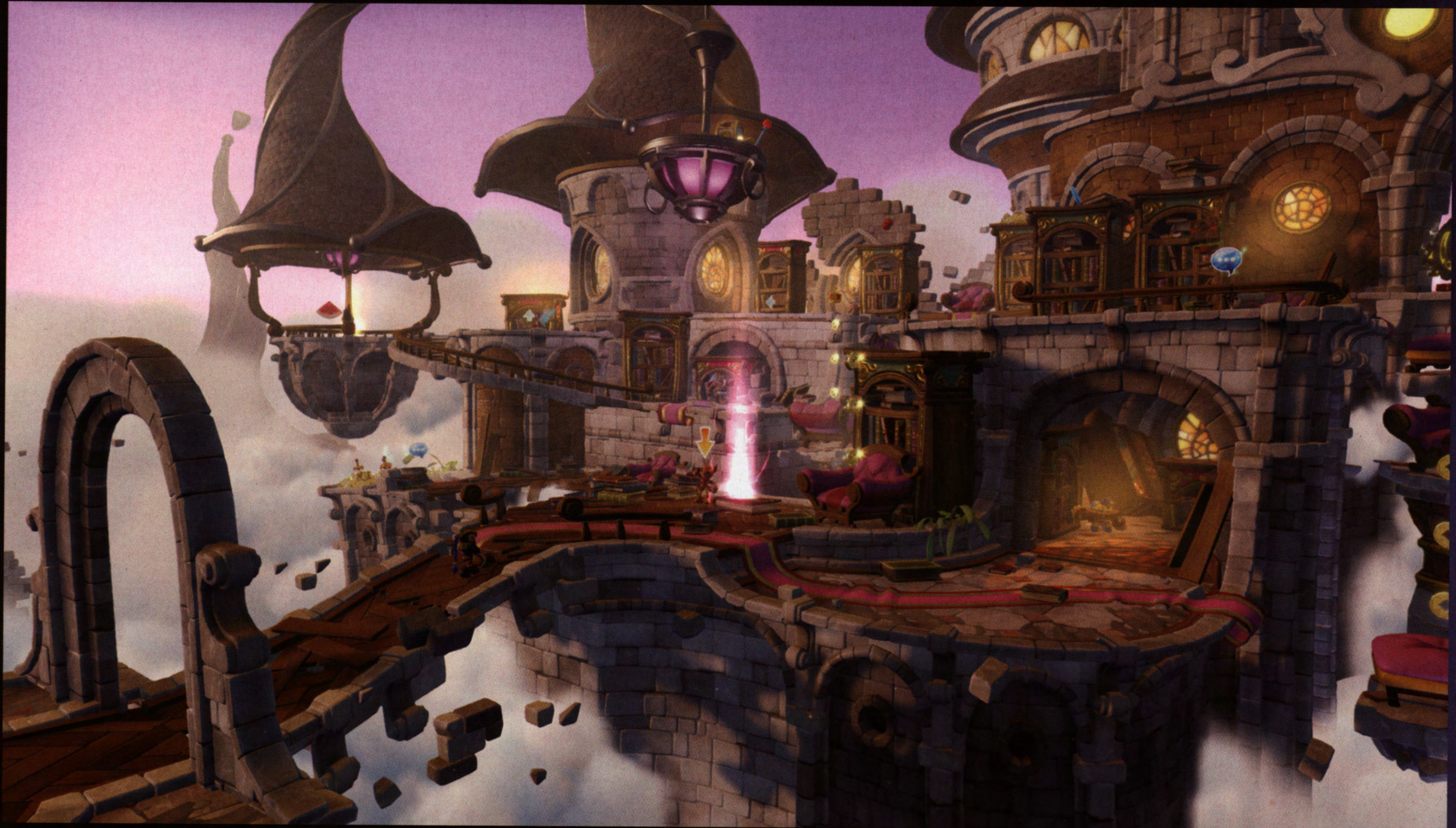




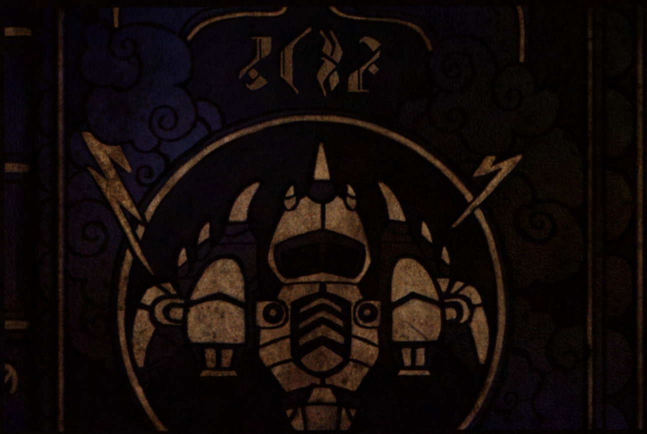


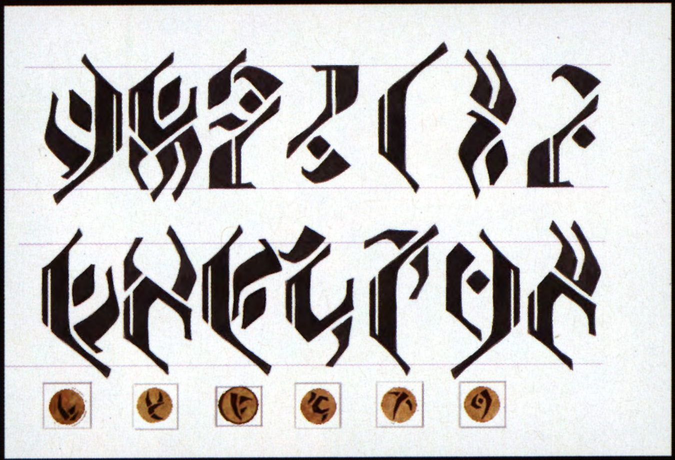
SCREENSHOTS

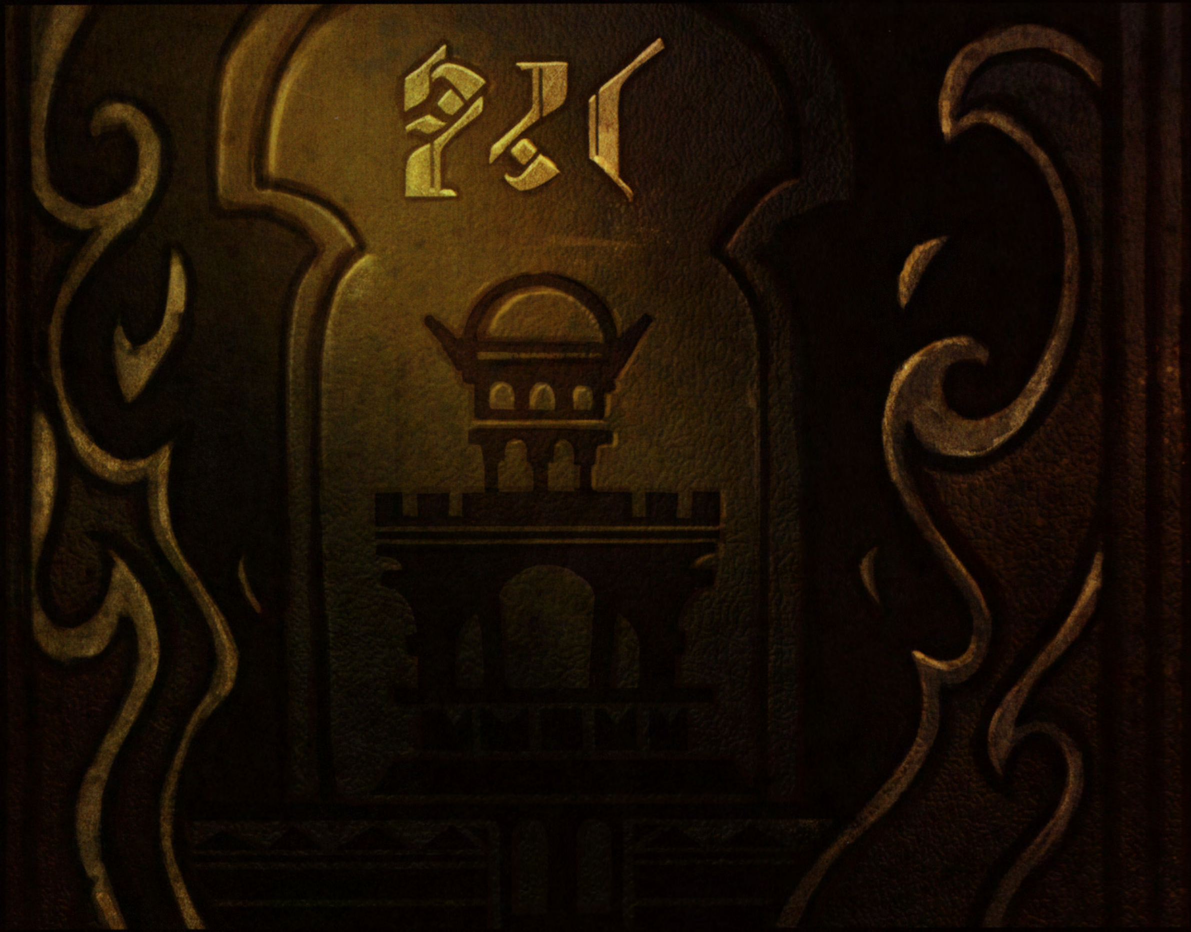




MAGIC BOOKS

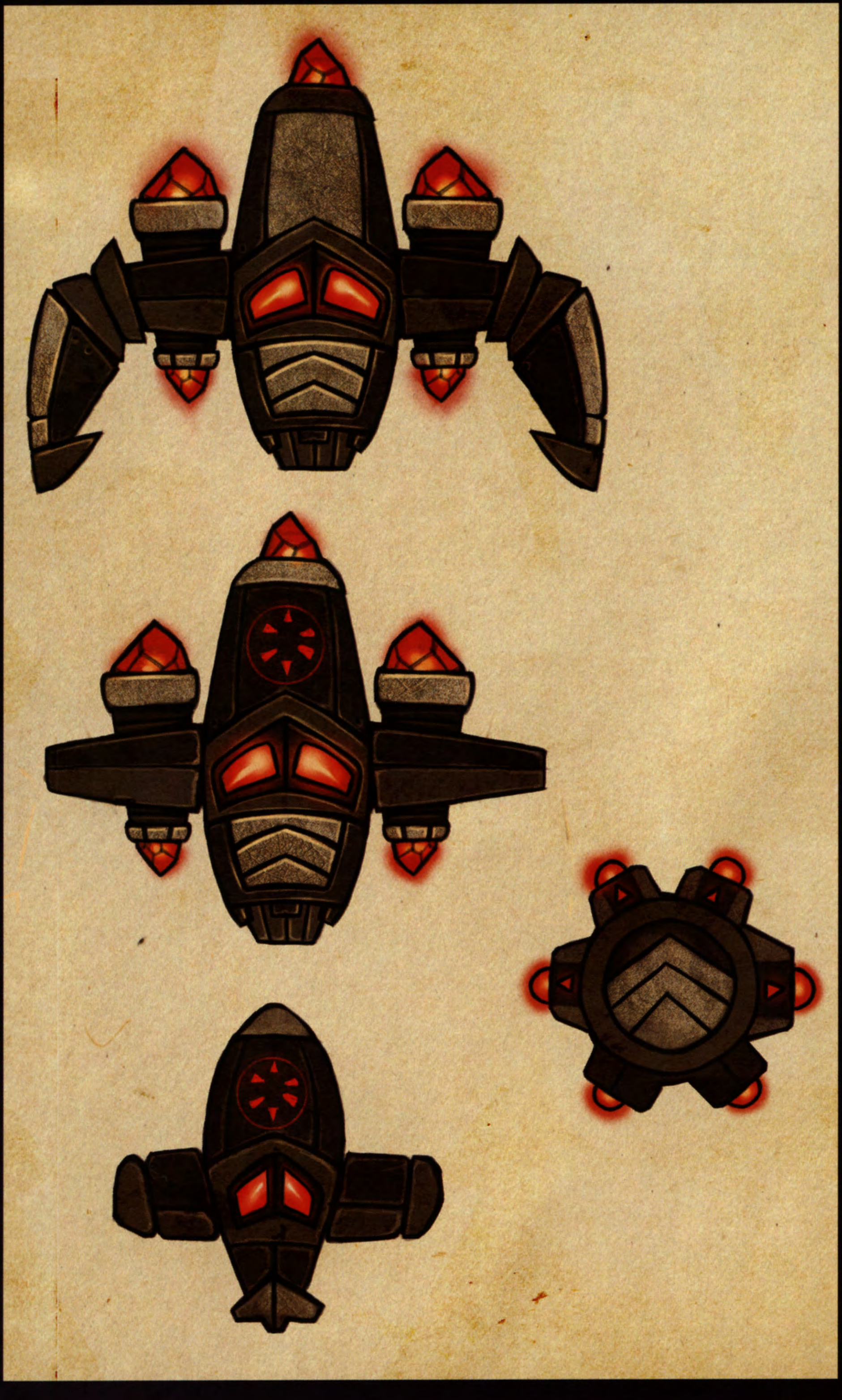


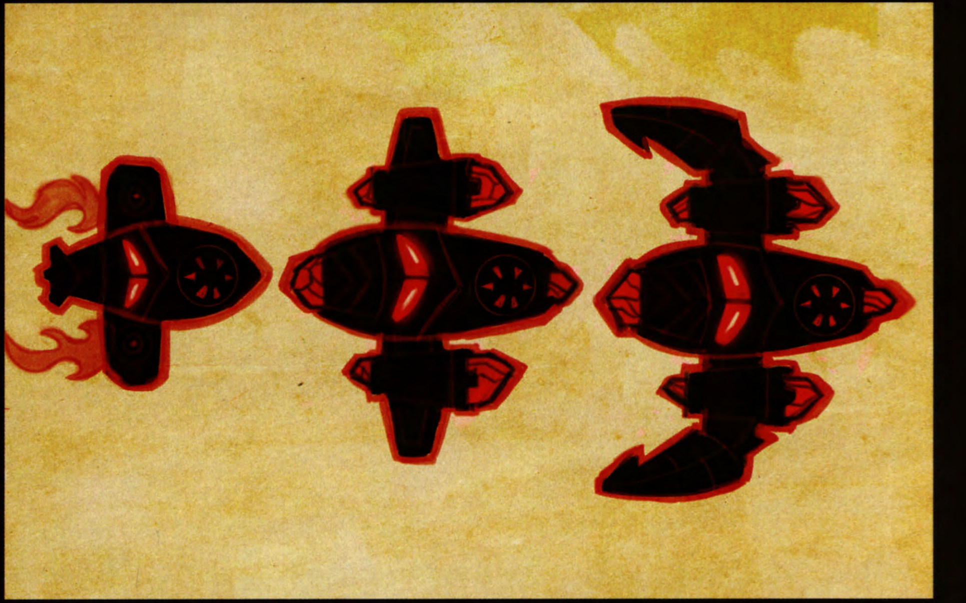


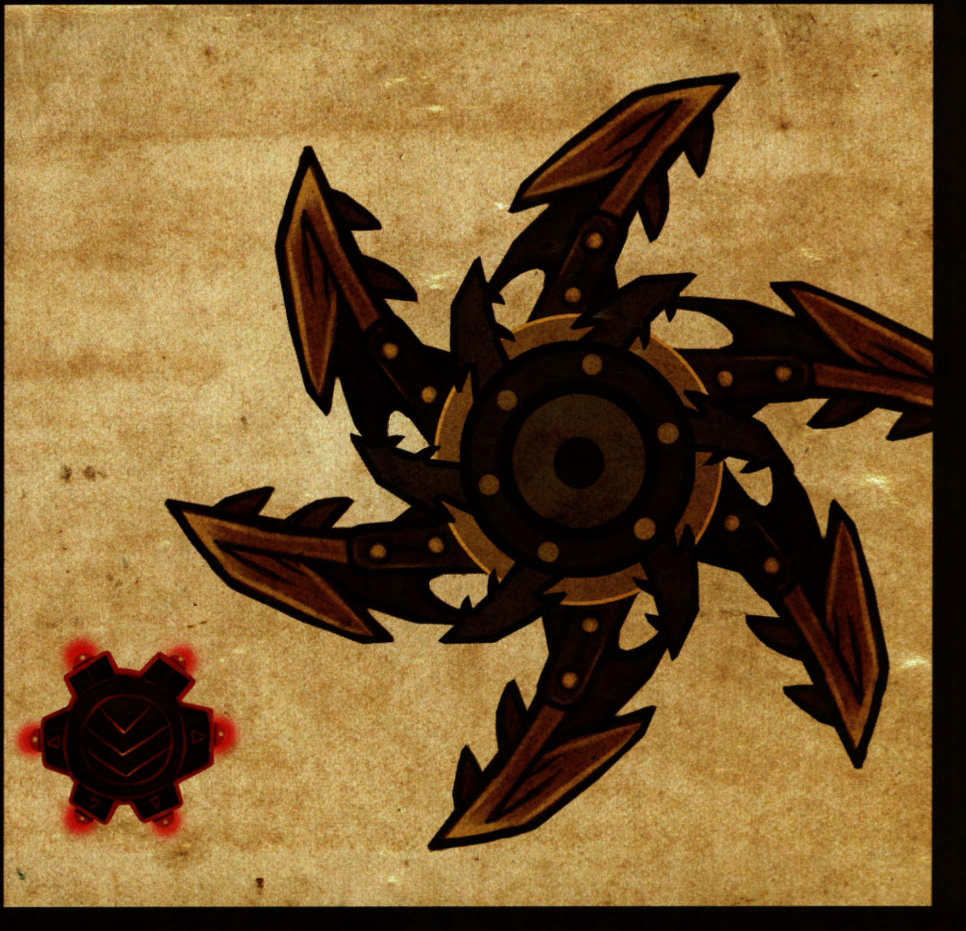


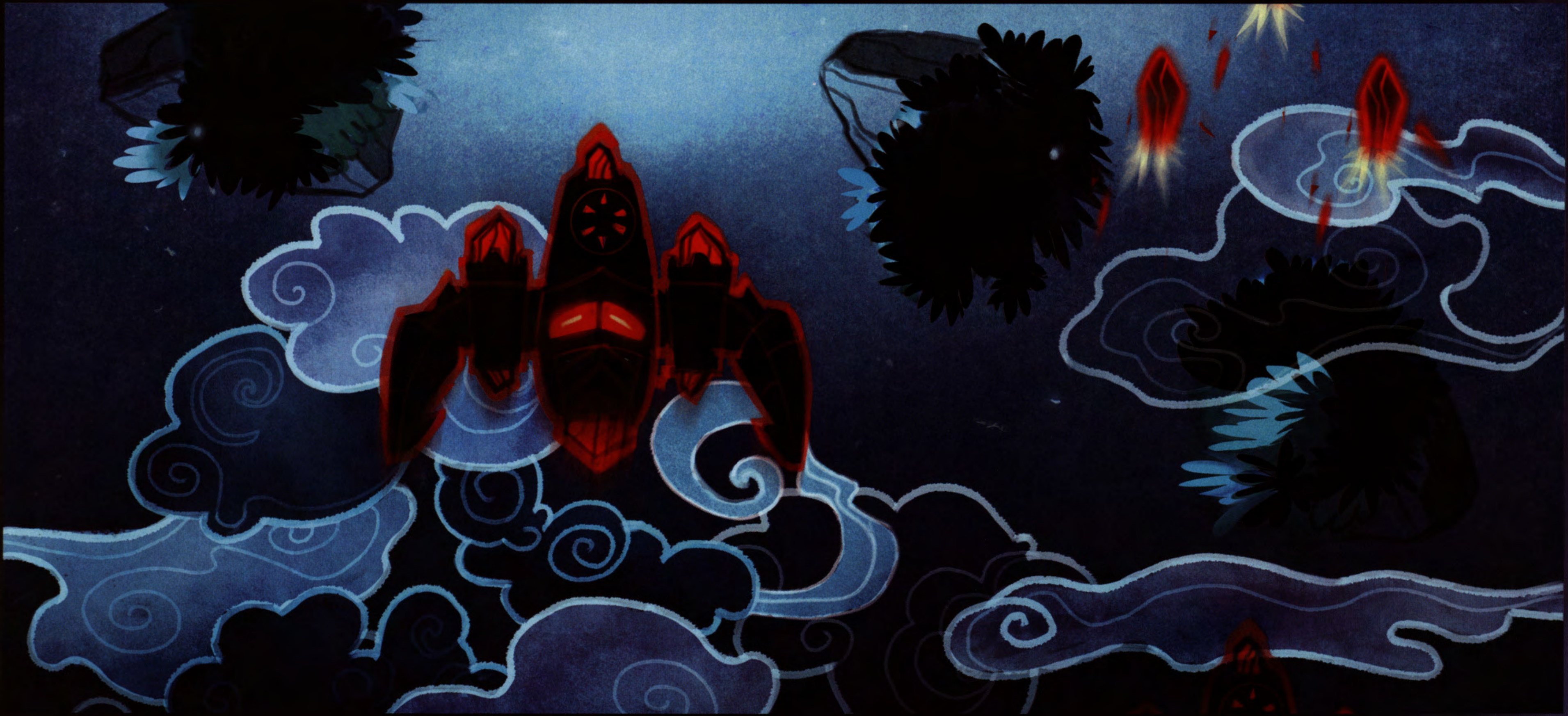
The Spellpunk Library was unique in that it brought concept art straight into the game. It pulls the look off with style to spare.

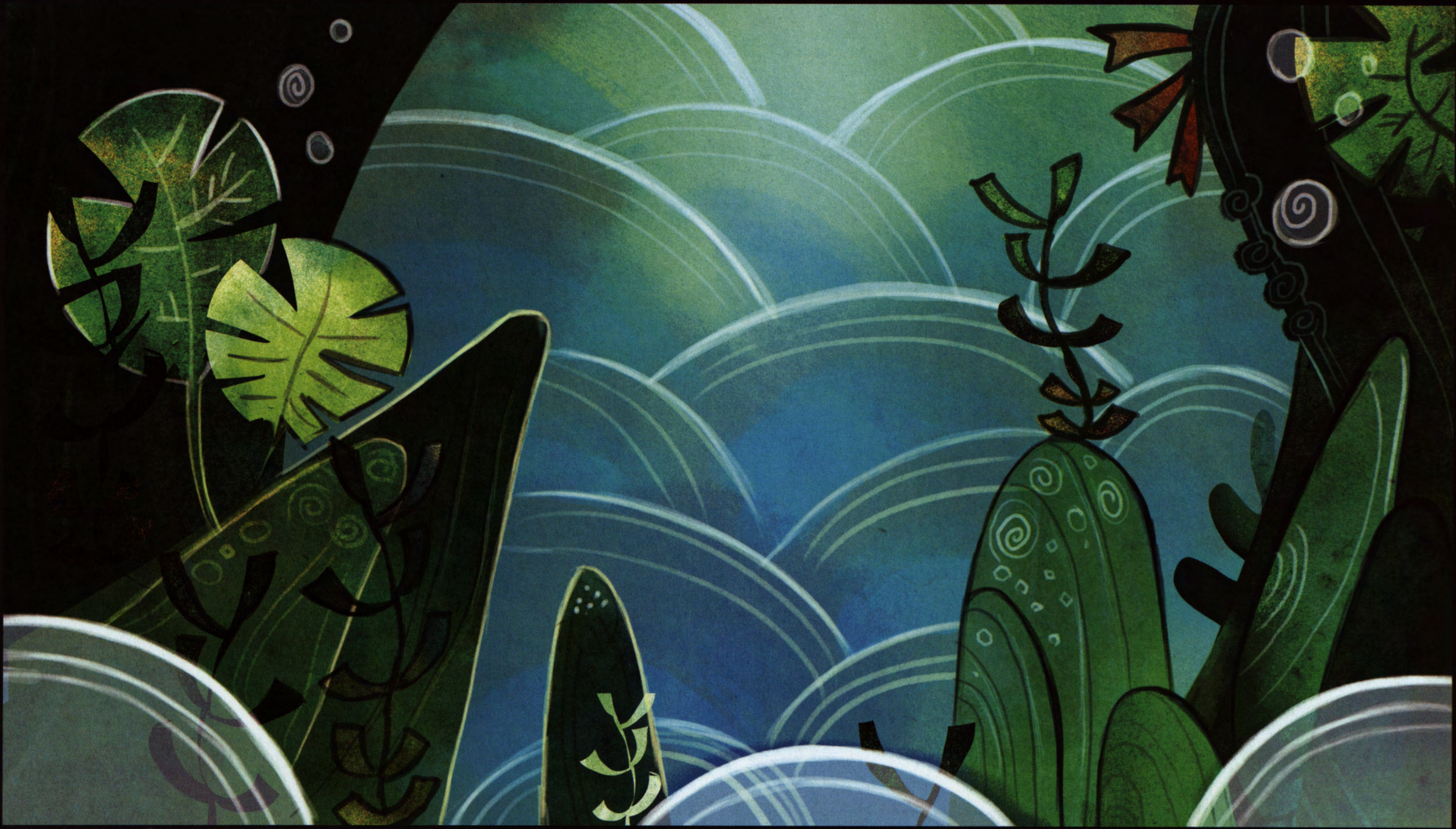
– Lucas Wells





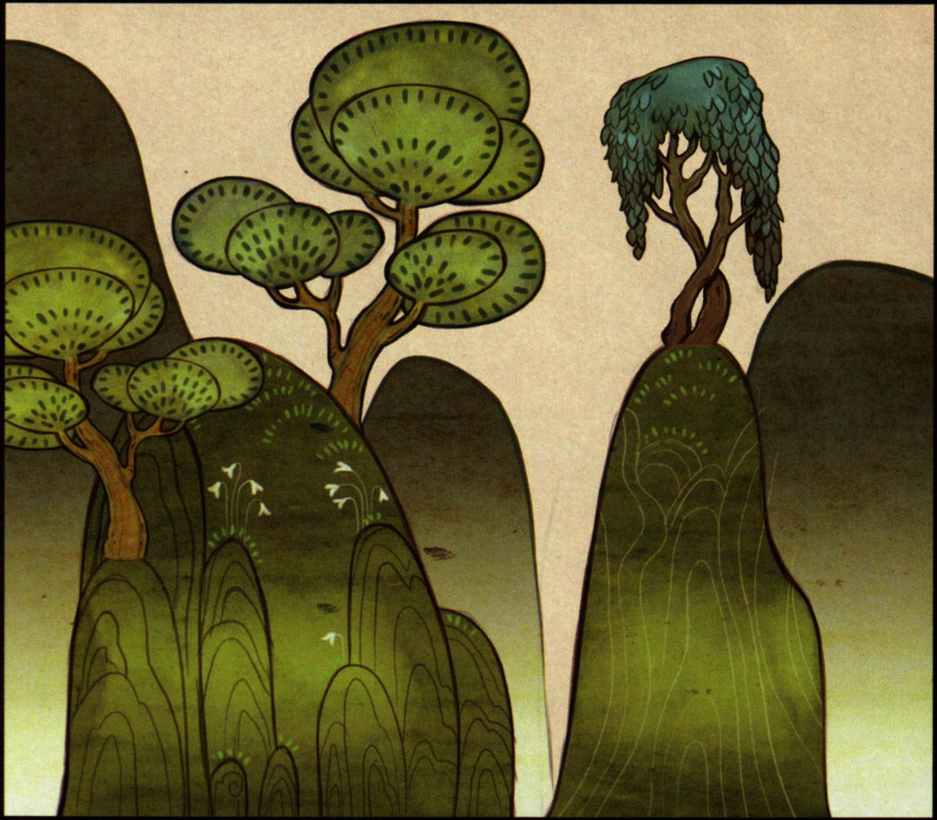


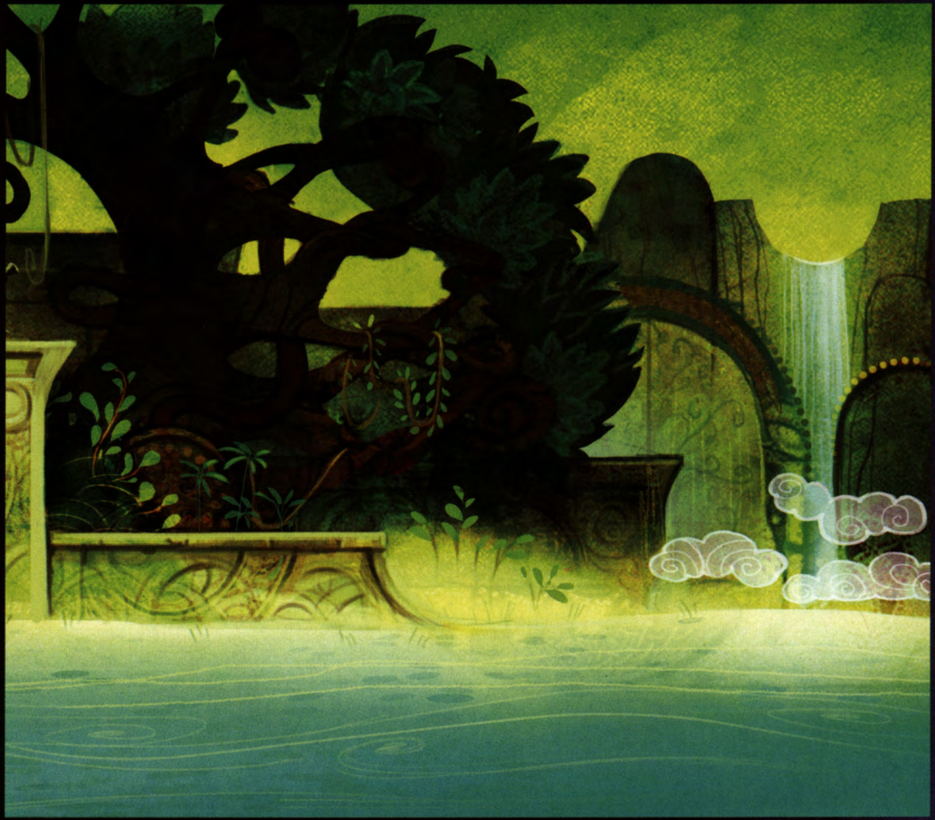


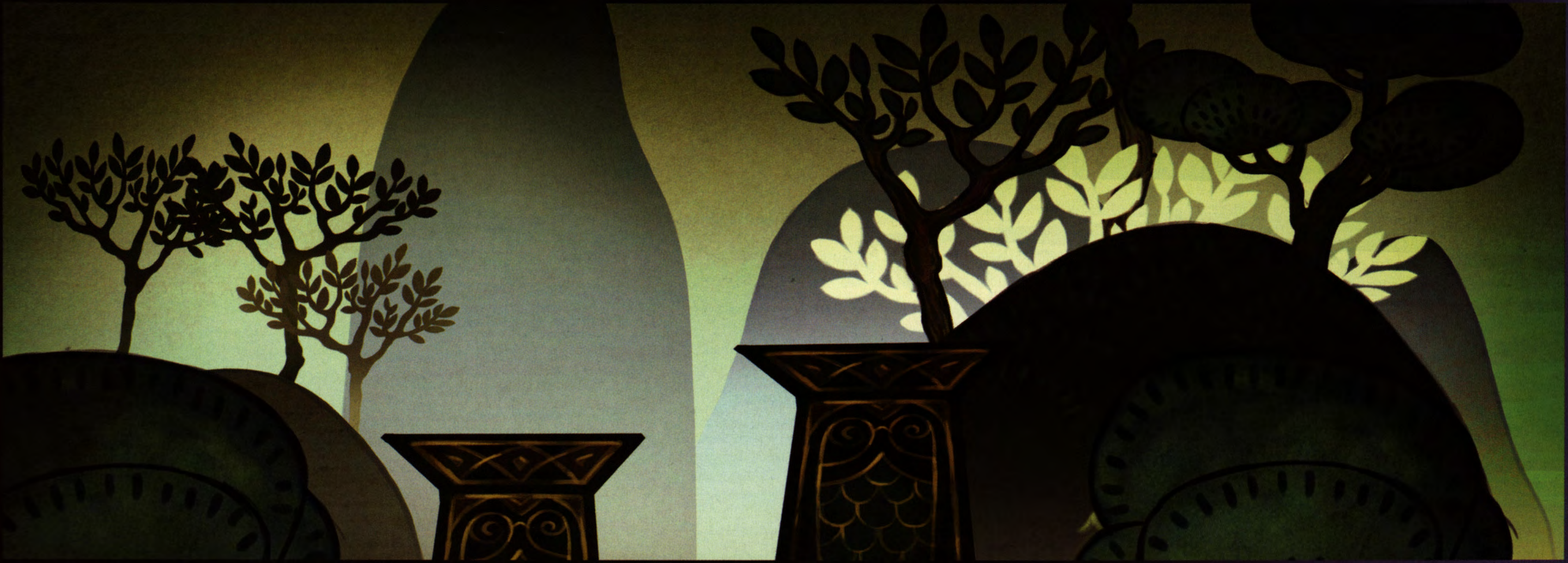


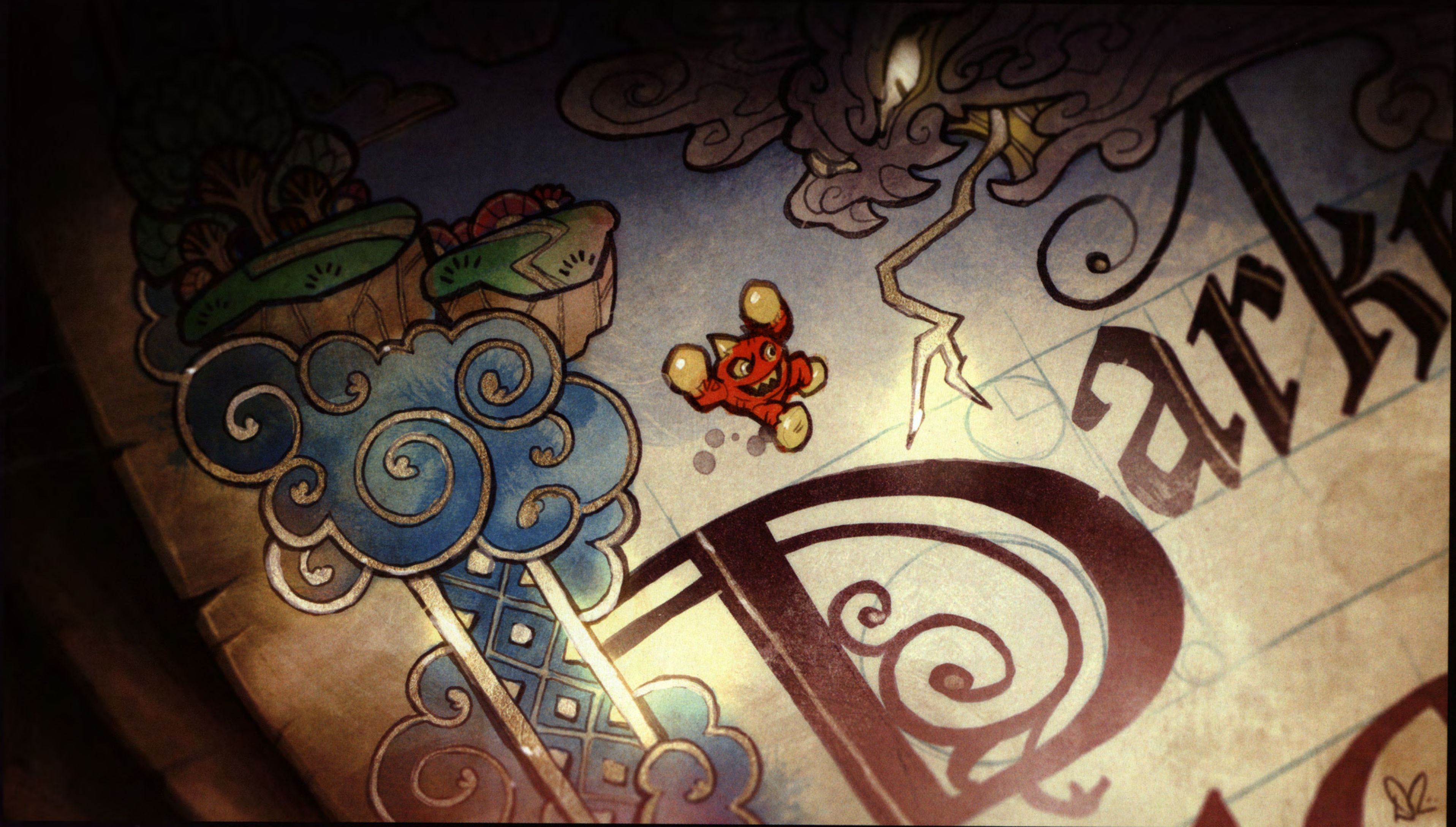
This entire section should be called, “Arzu’s Adventures in Arzu Land”.

– Jeff Bellio



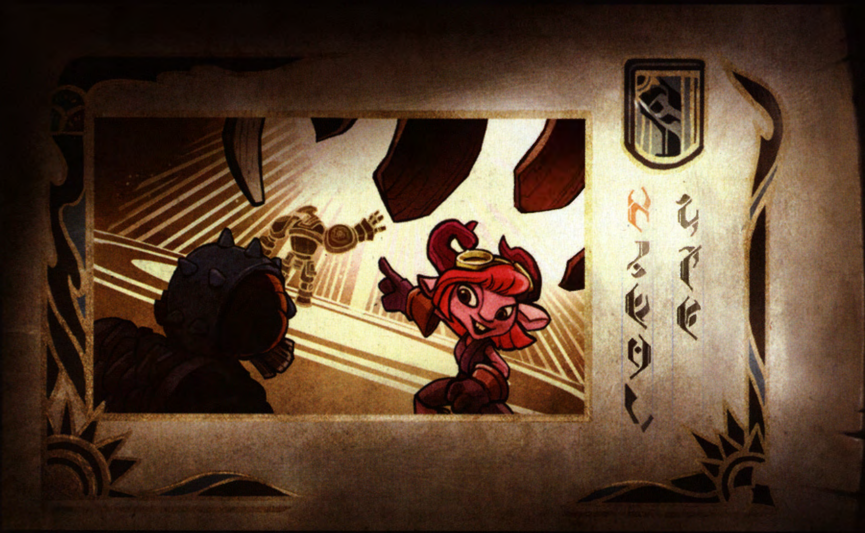


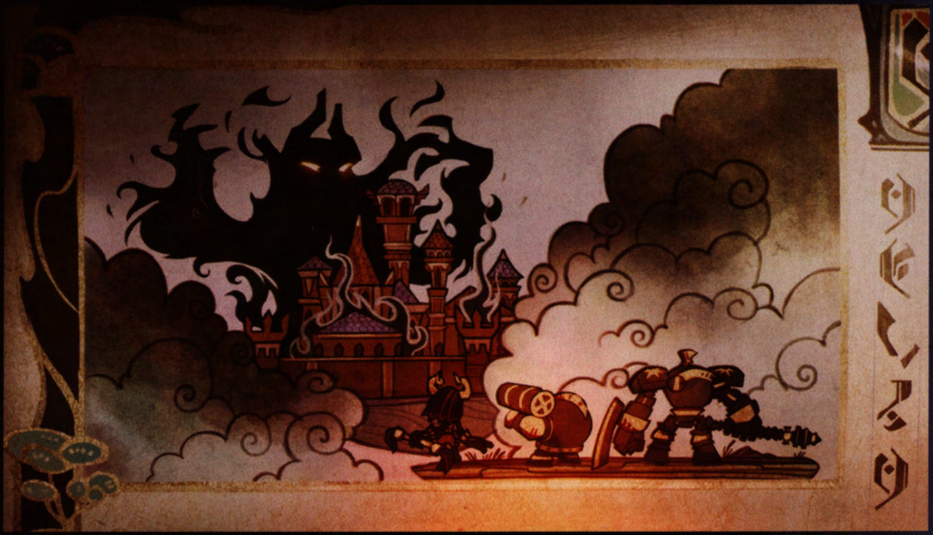


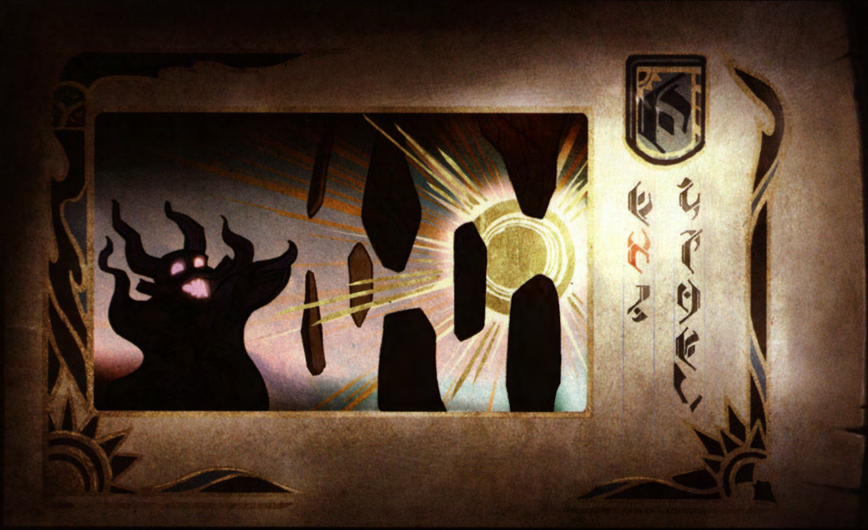


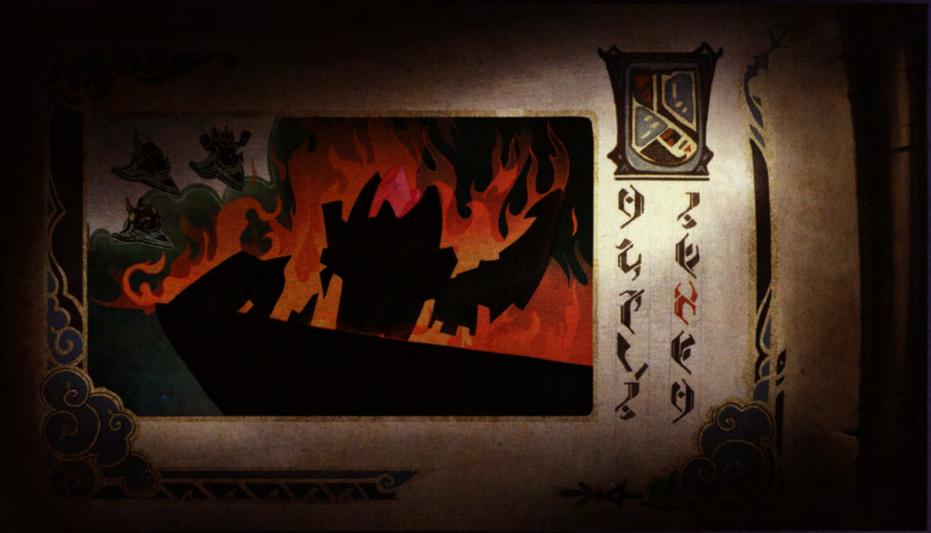
I cannot tell you how excited I was when I found out that René Auberjonois was going to narrate these levels!

– Jeremy Russo

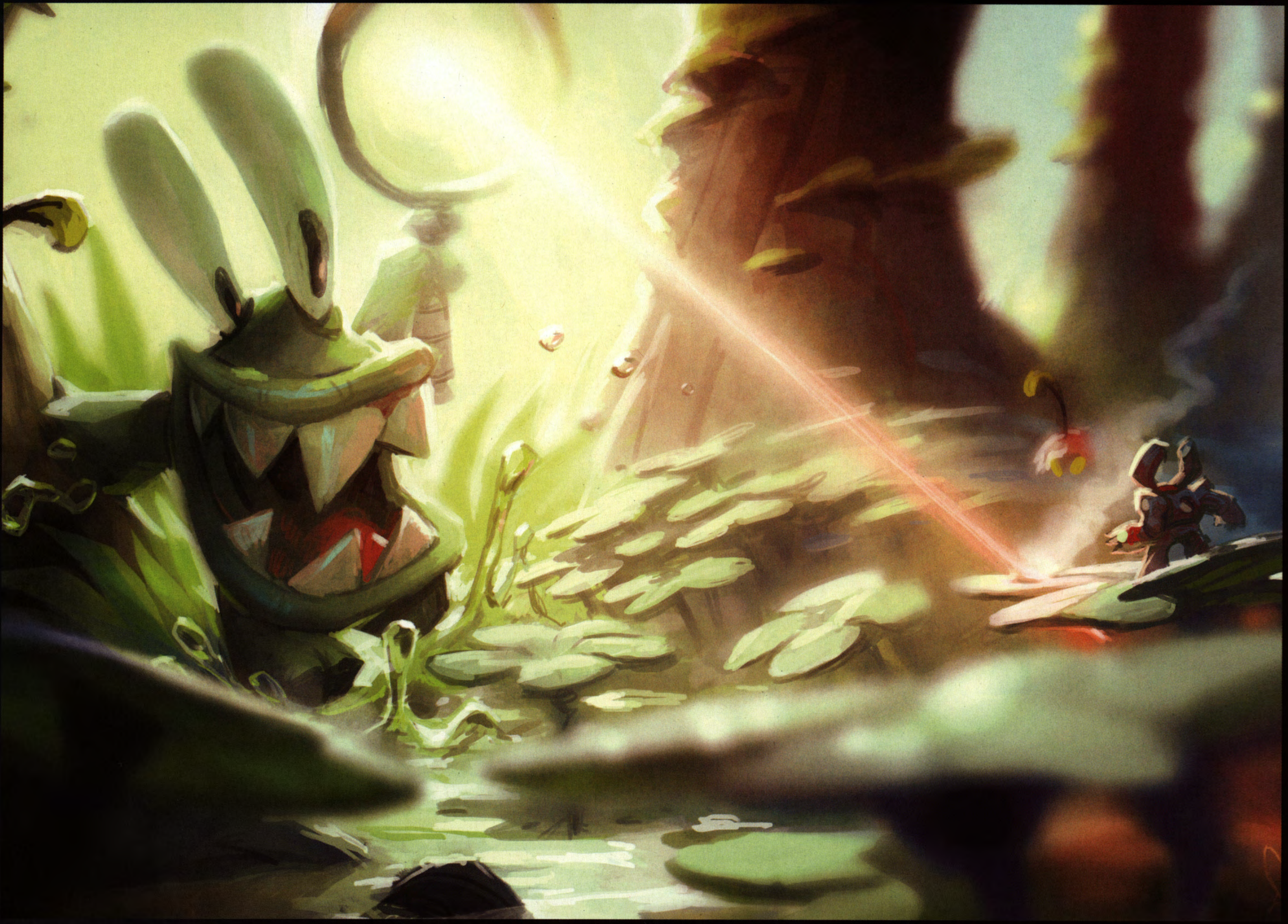


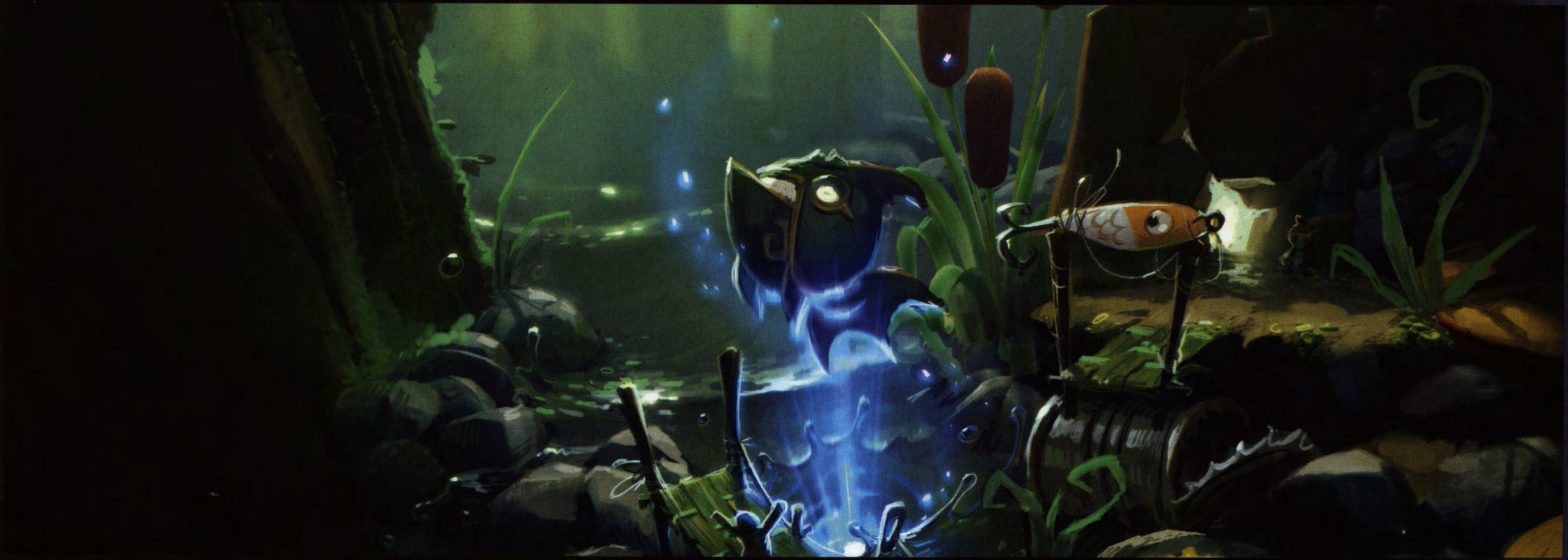


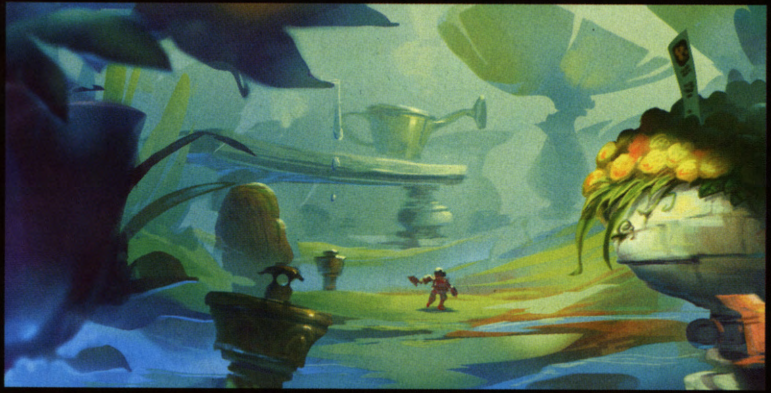


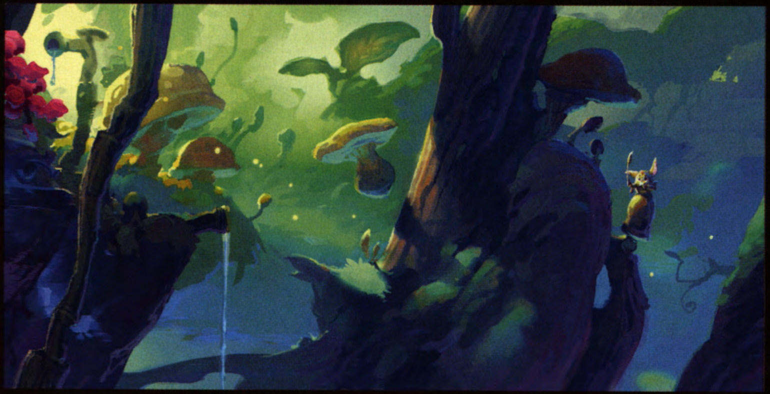


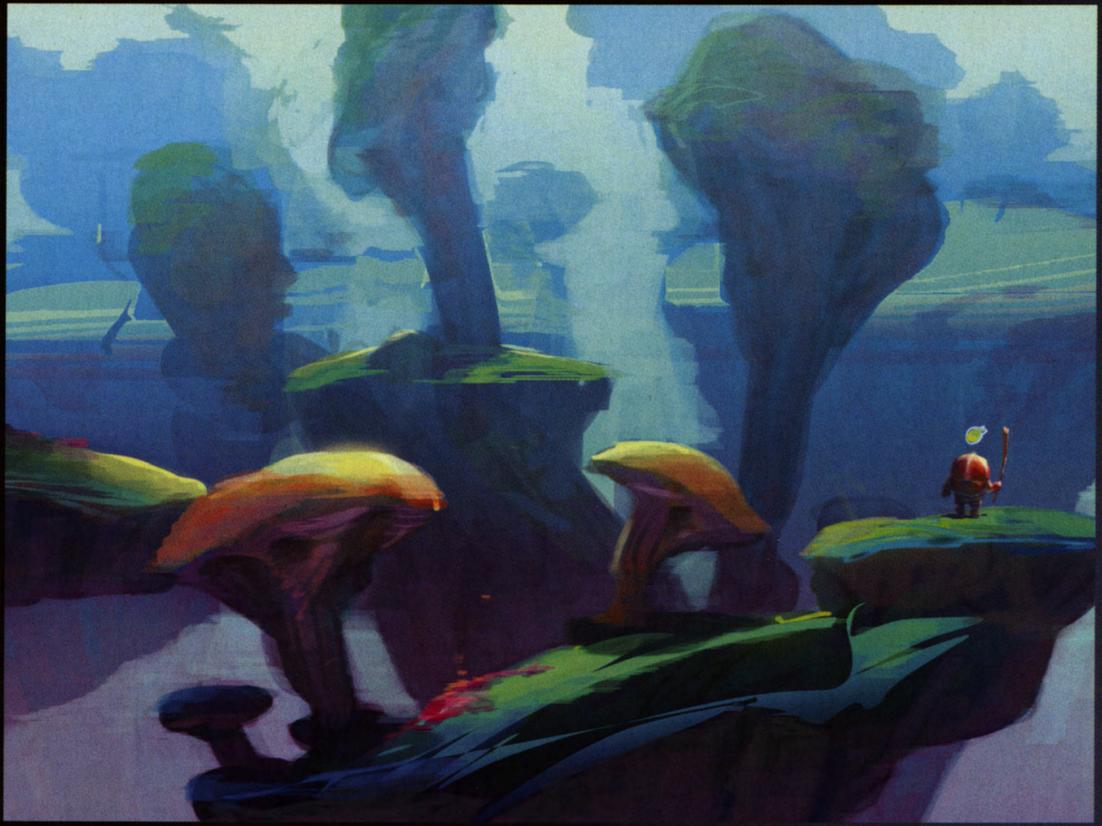
GADFLY GLADES

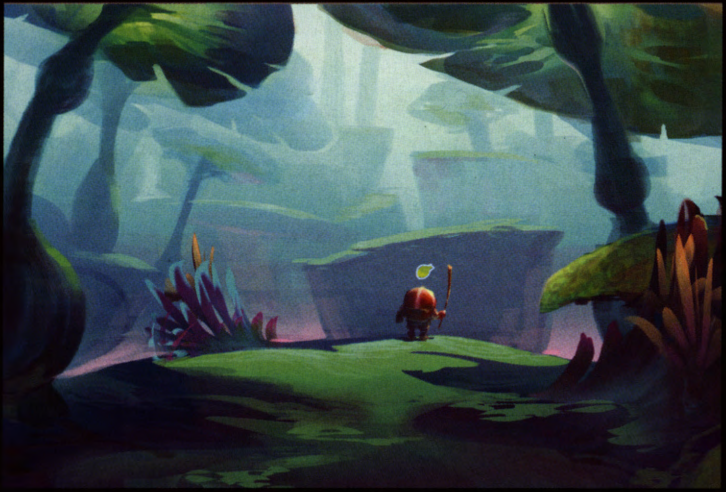


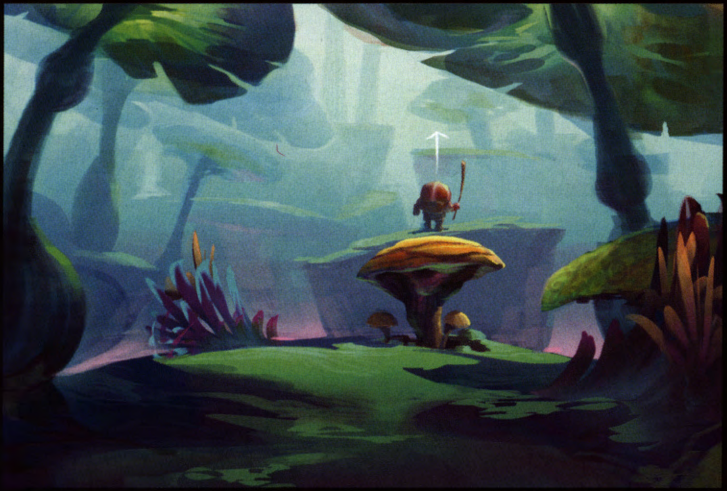


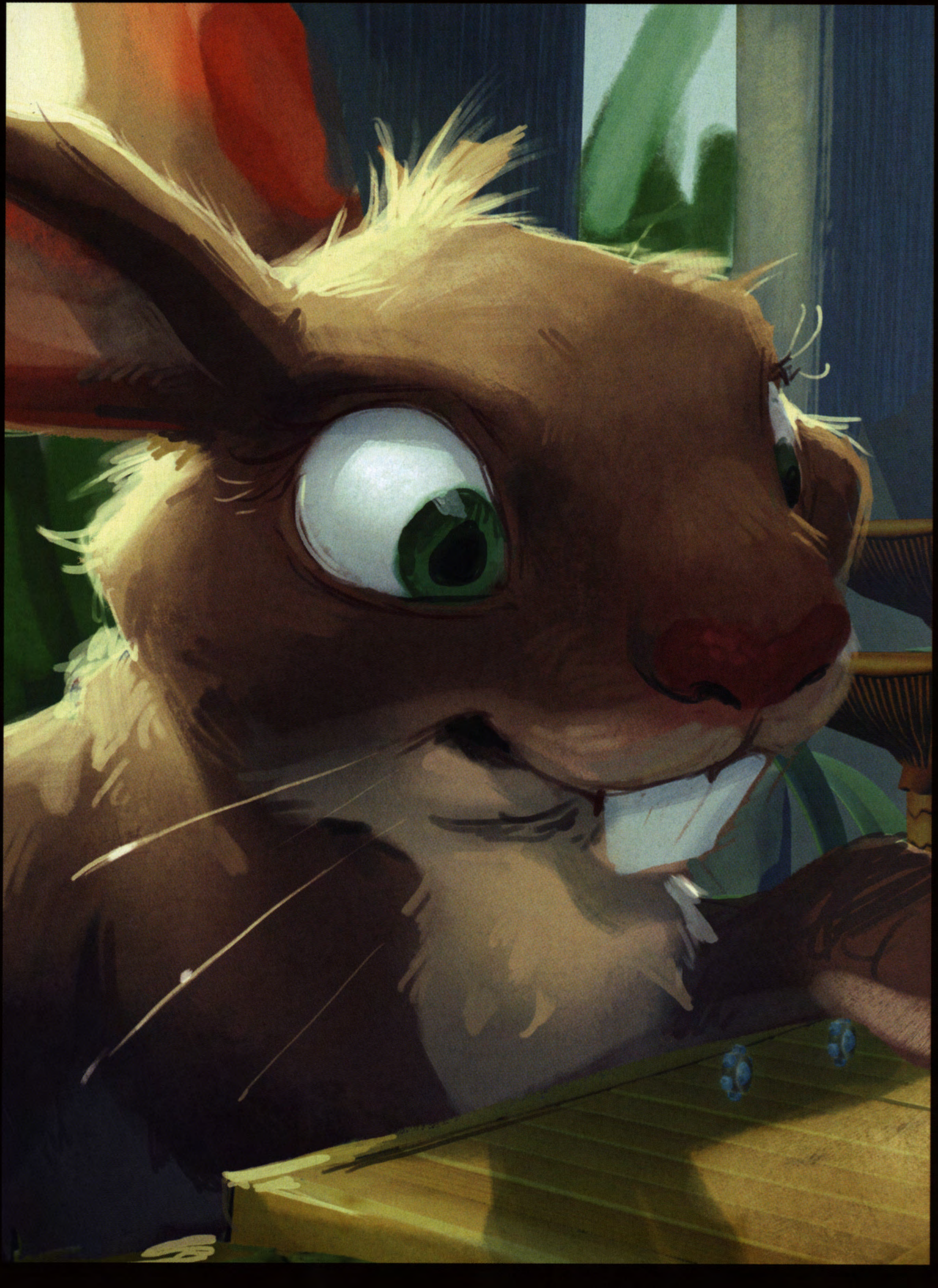






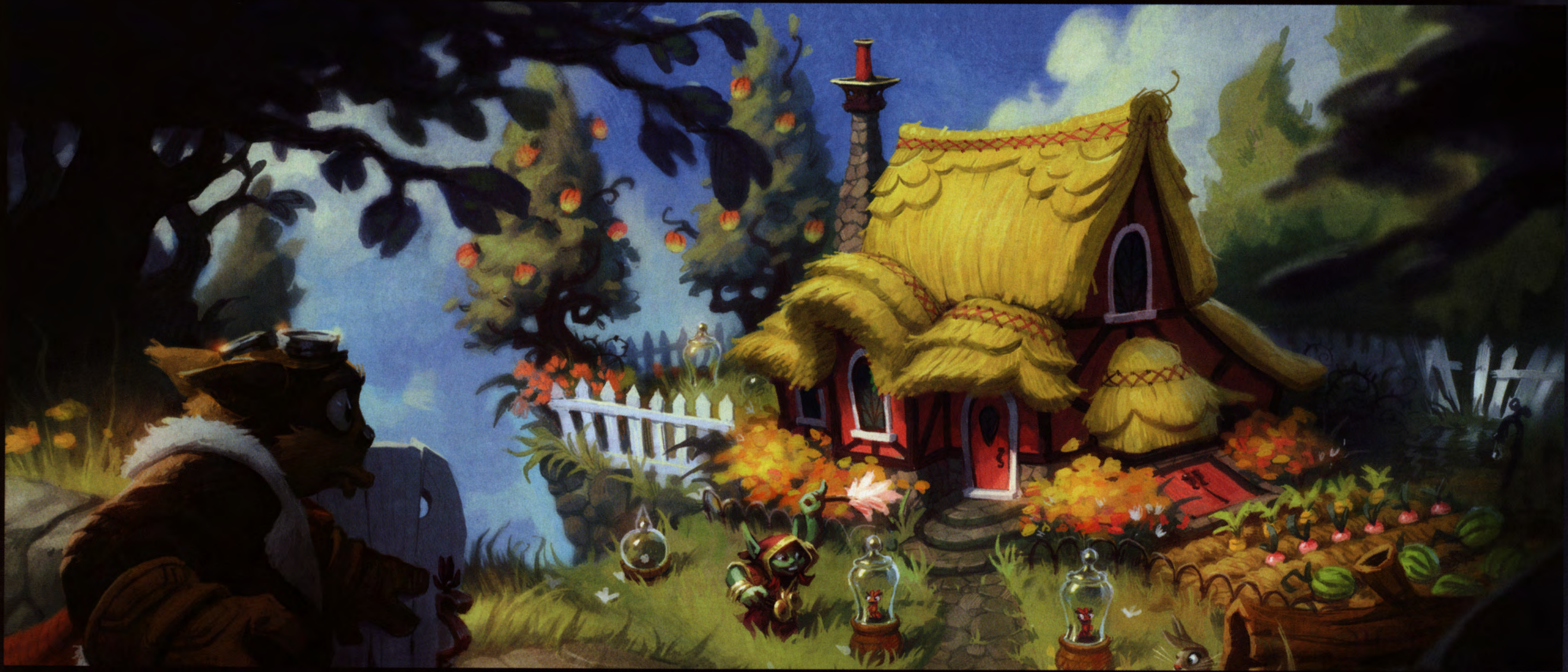


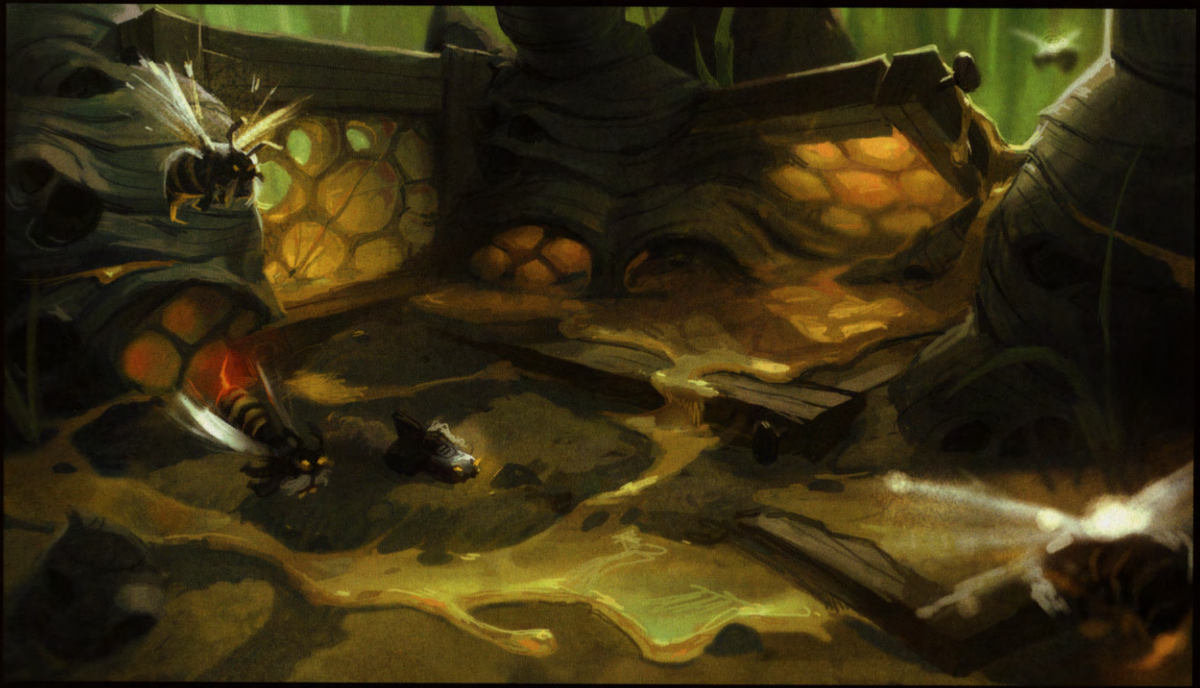


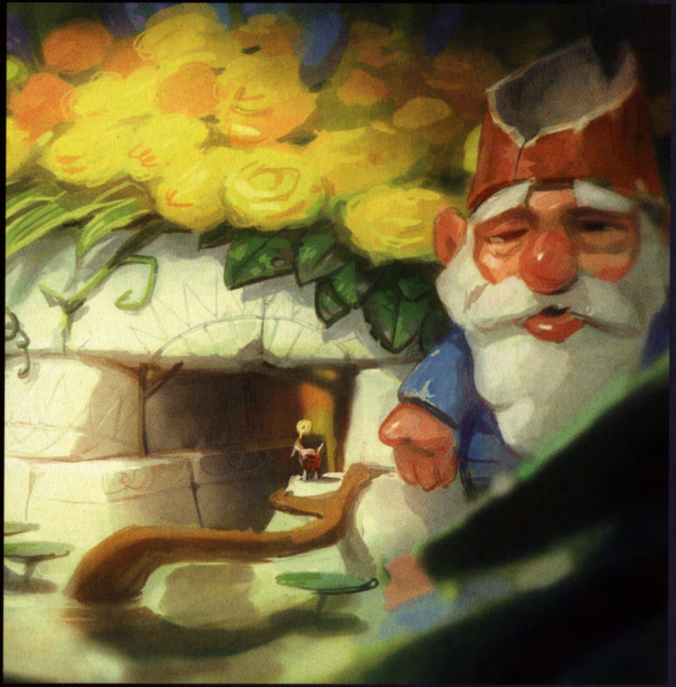


If I had a nickel for every time I heard how much the rabbit cost to create, well… it might have paid itself off.

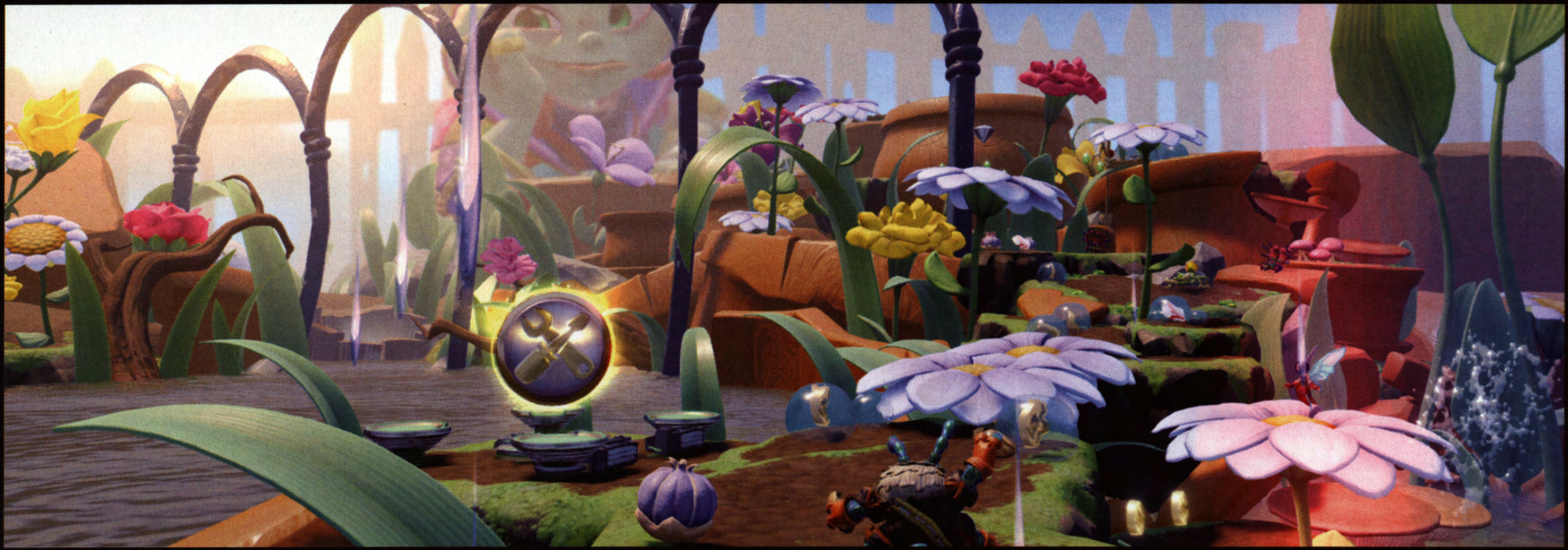
– Lucas Wells

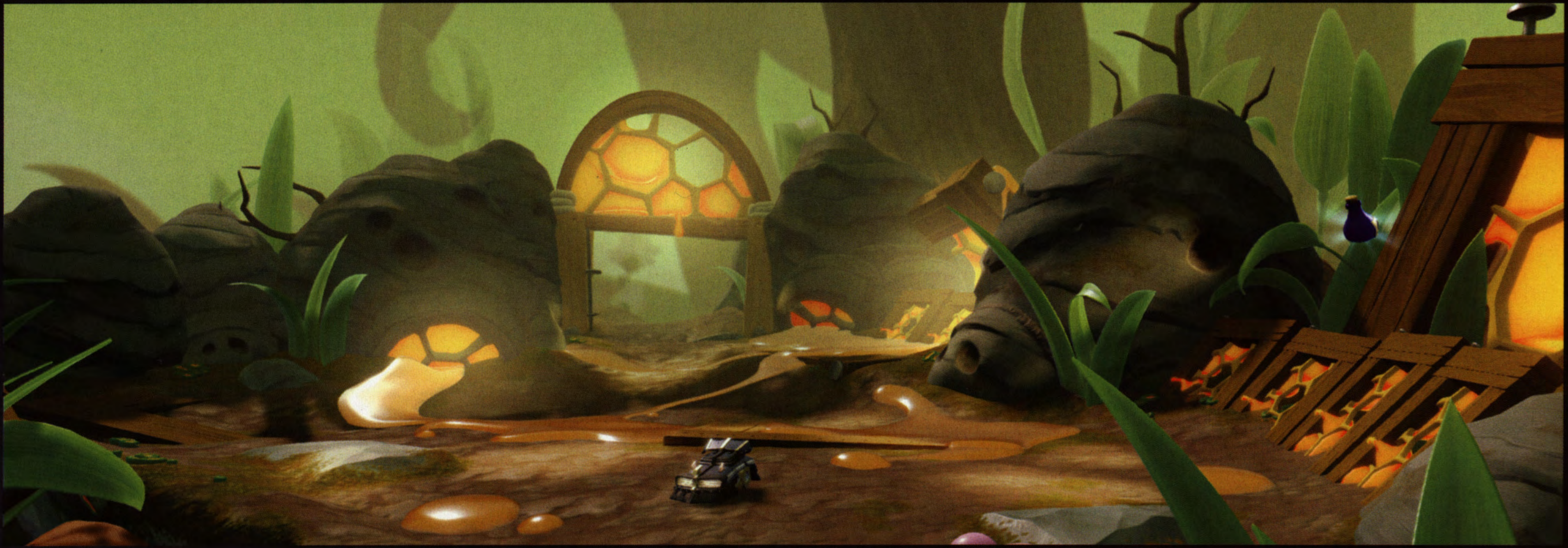


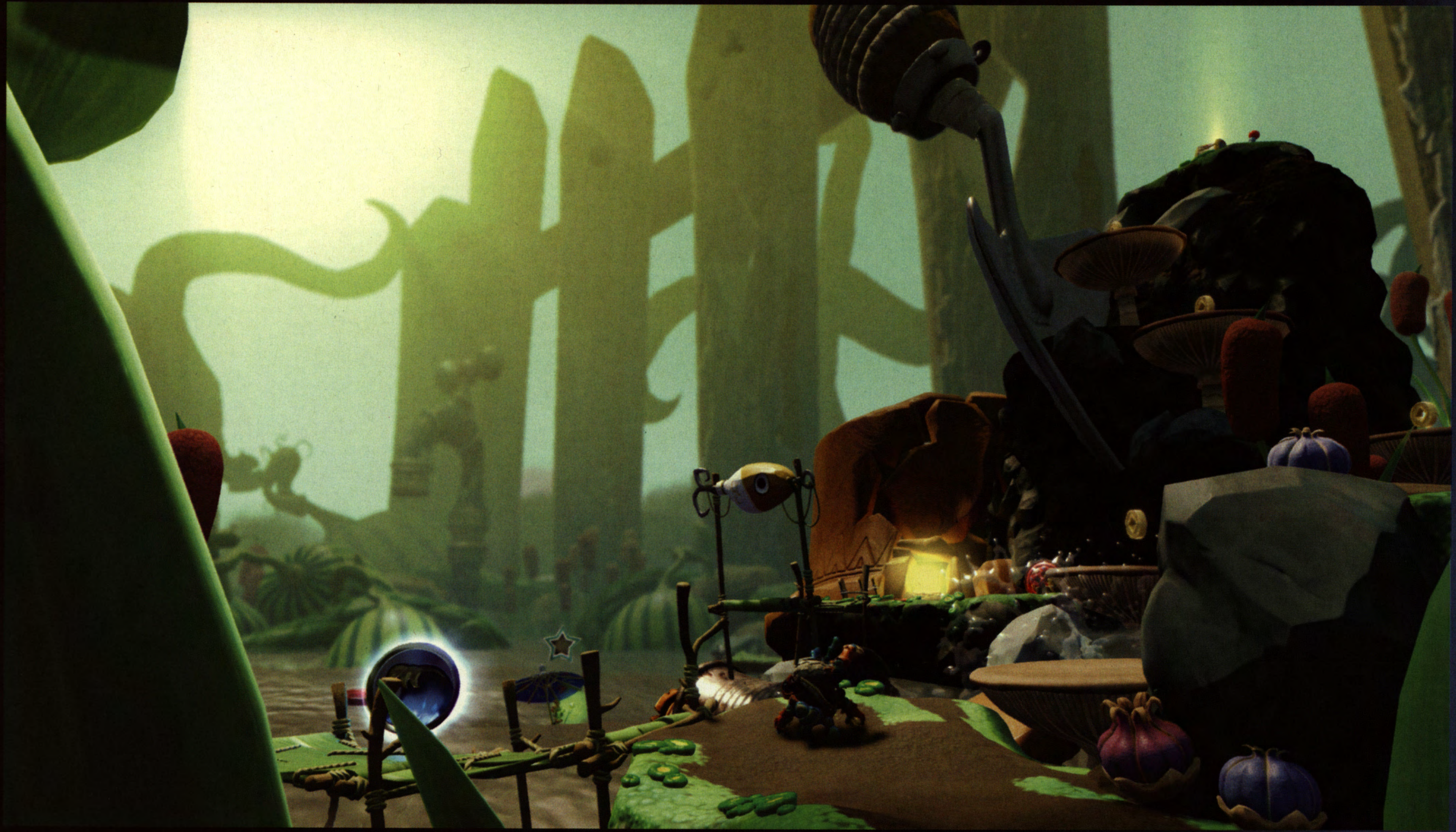




SCREENSHOTS

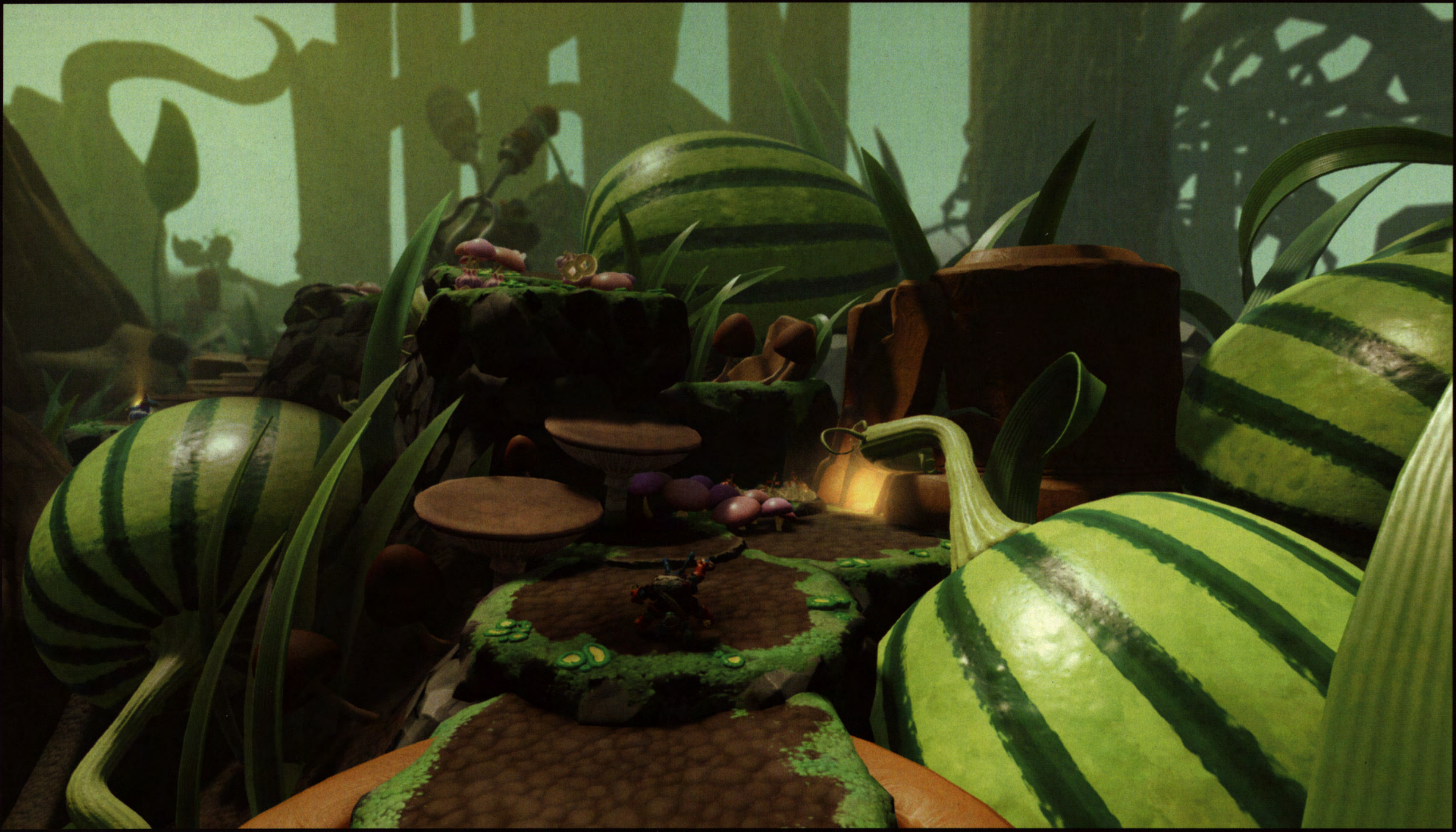






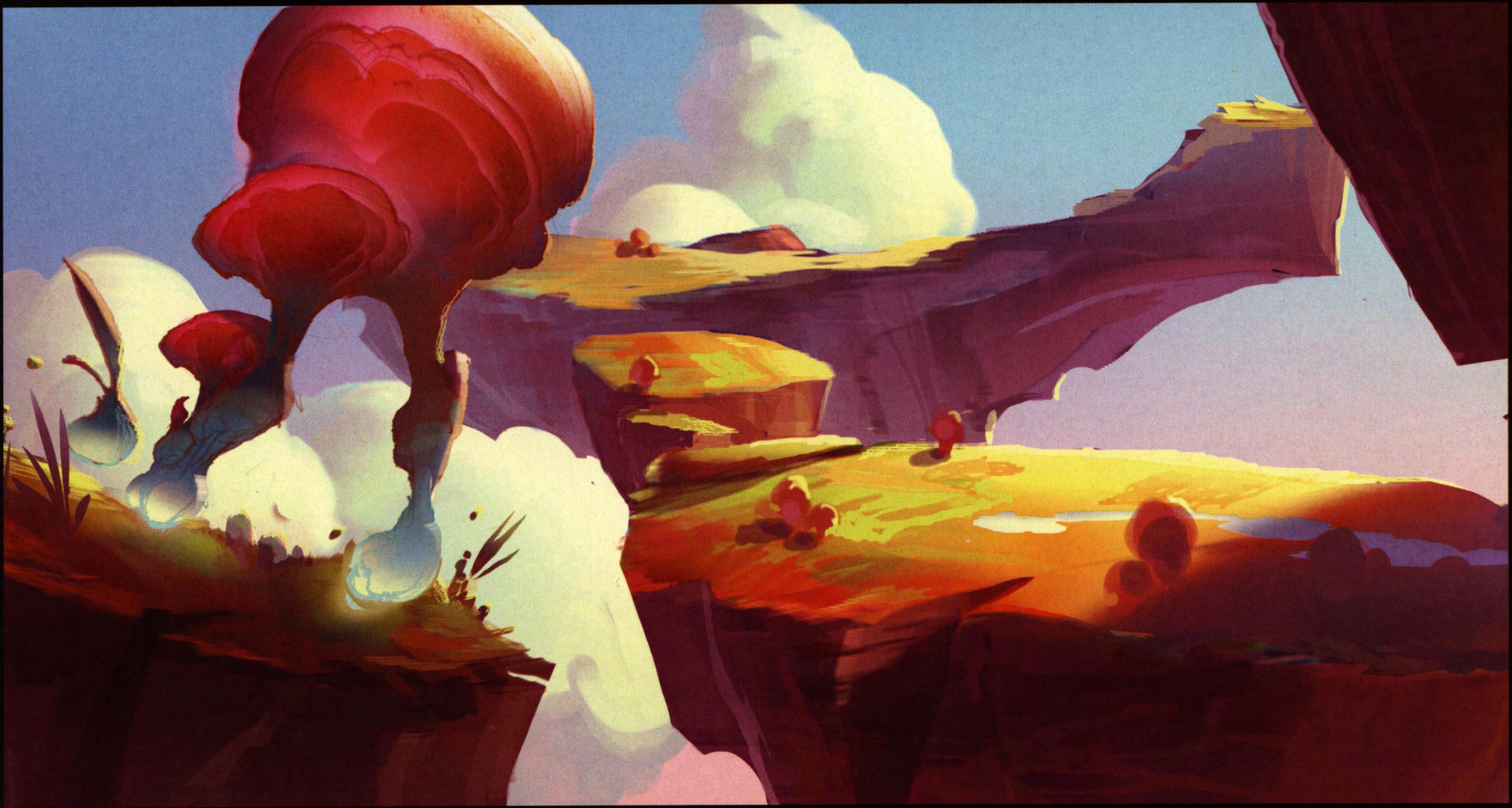
This project was an excellent opportunity for the environmental artists to truly hone their rock-sculpting abilities.

– Matt Helsom



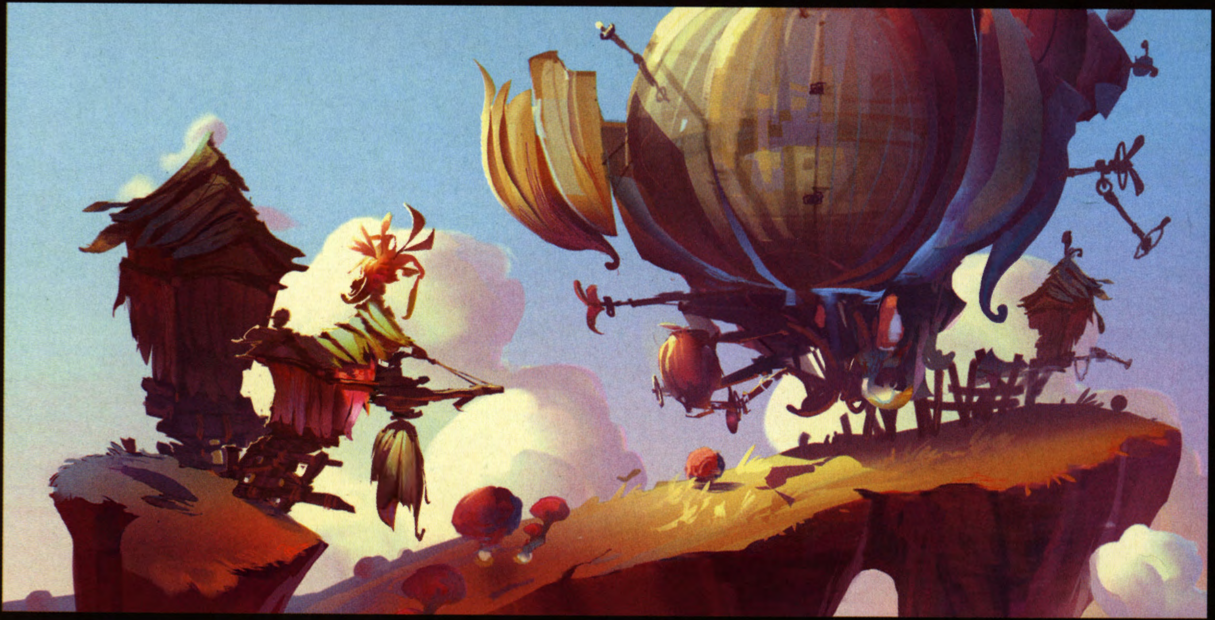
WELCOME
HERO #
235

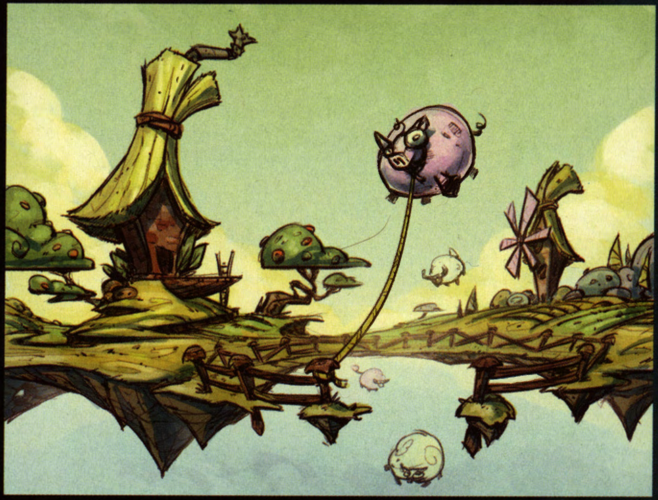
CAP'N CLUCK'S CHICKEN HQ

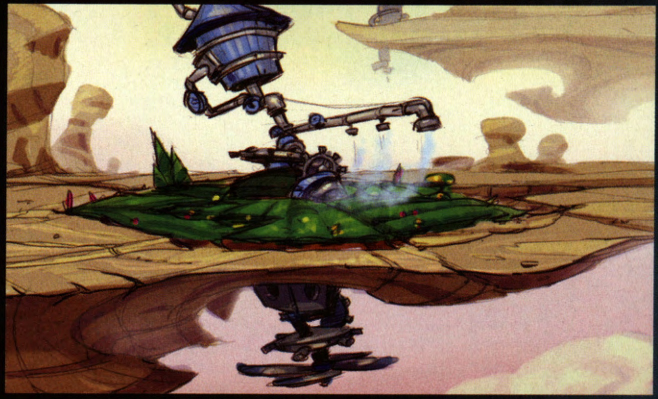


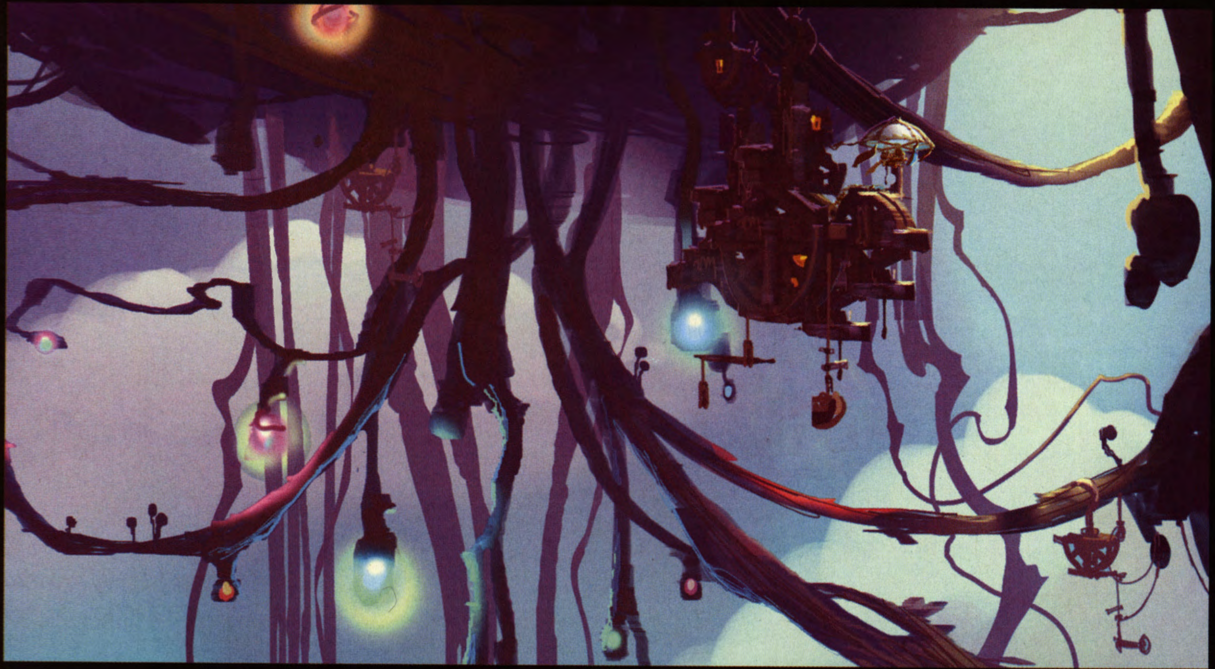
With Cap'n Cluck, we were able to focus a storyline on an individual who is morally corrupt enough to sell out his own species by popping them between two sesame seed buns just to turn a profit. I love aging up!

– Brock Cerny

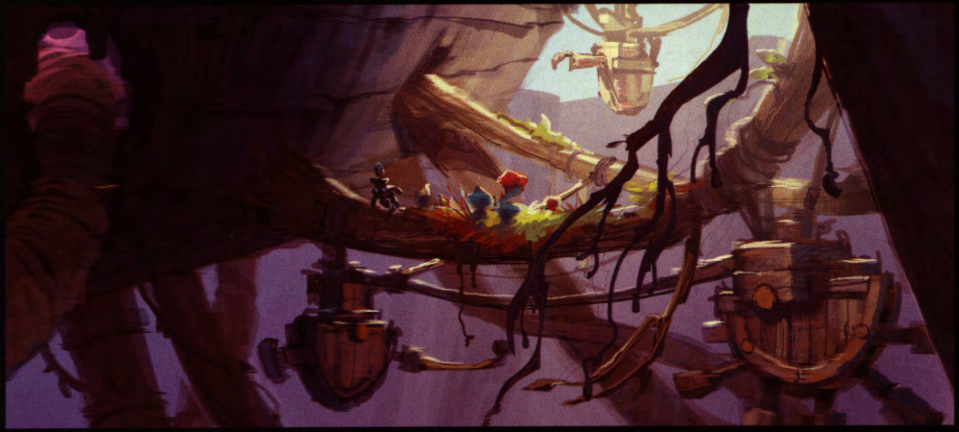


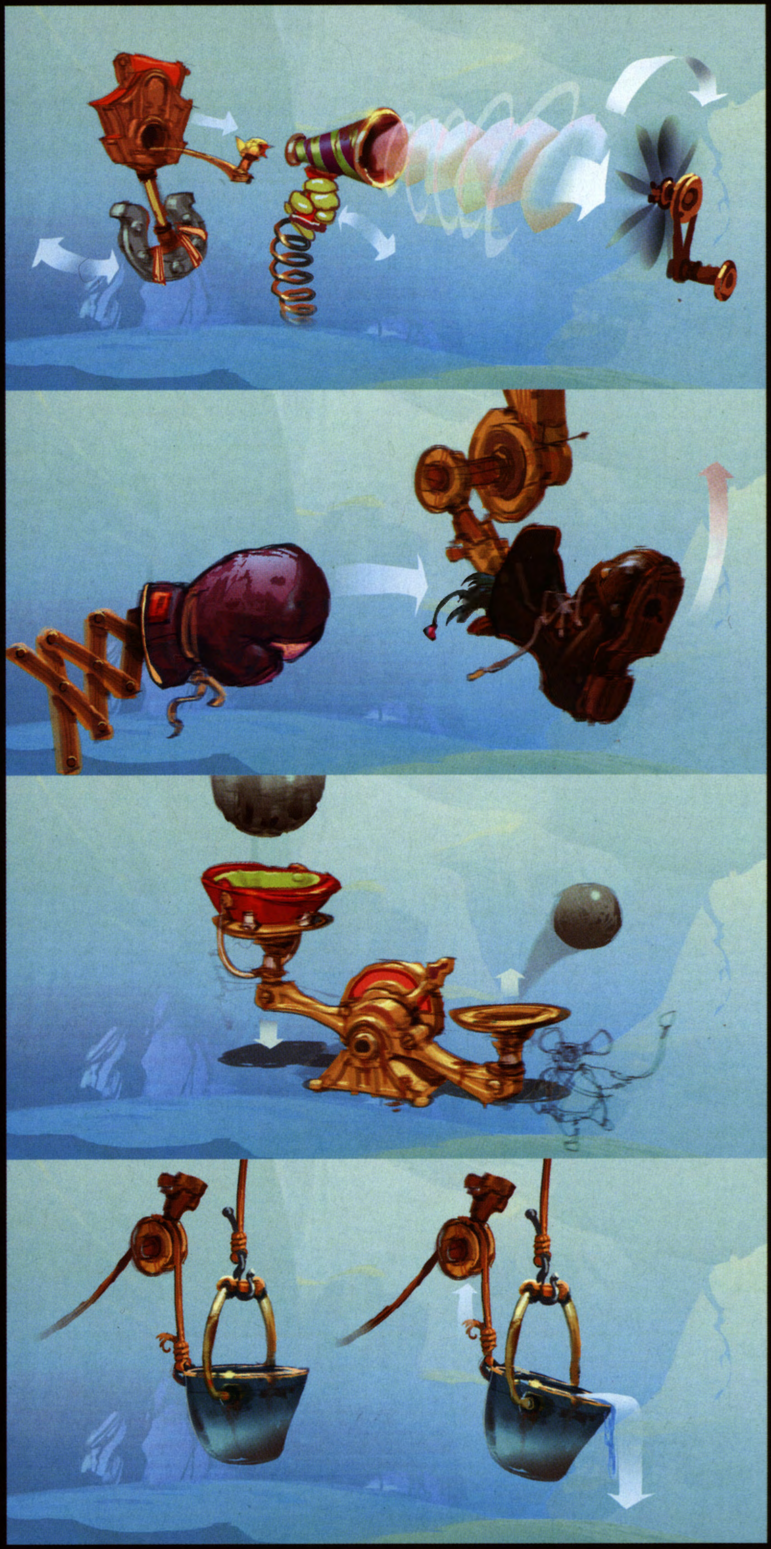


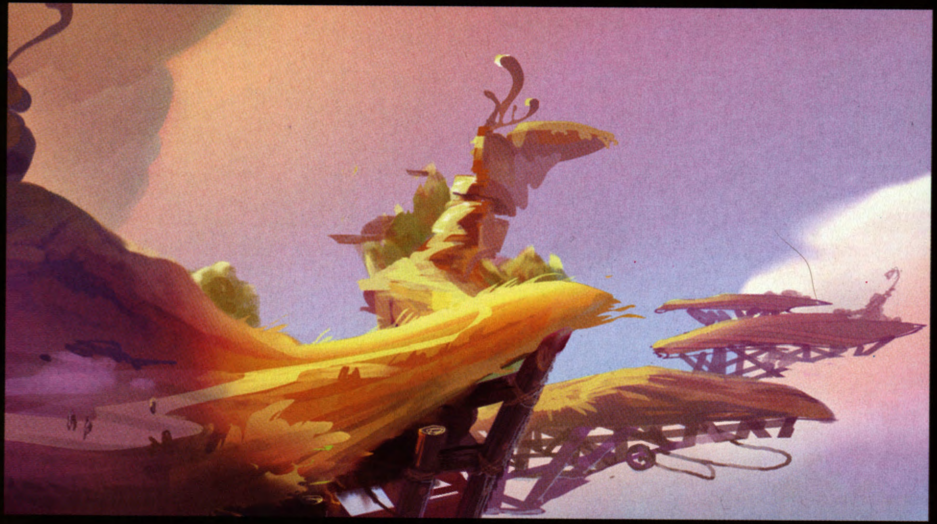


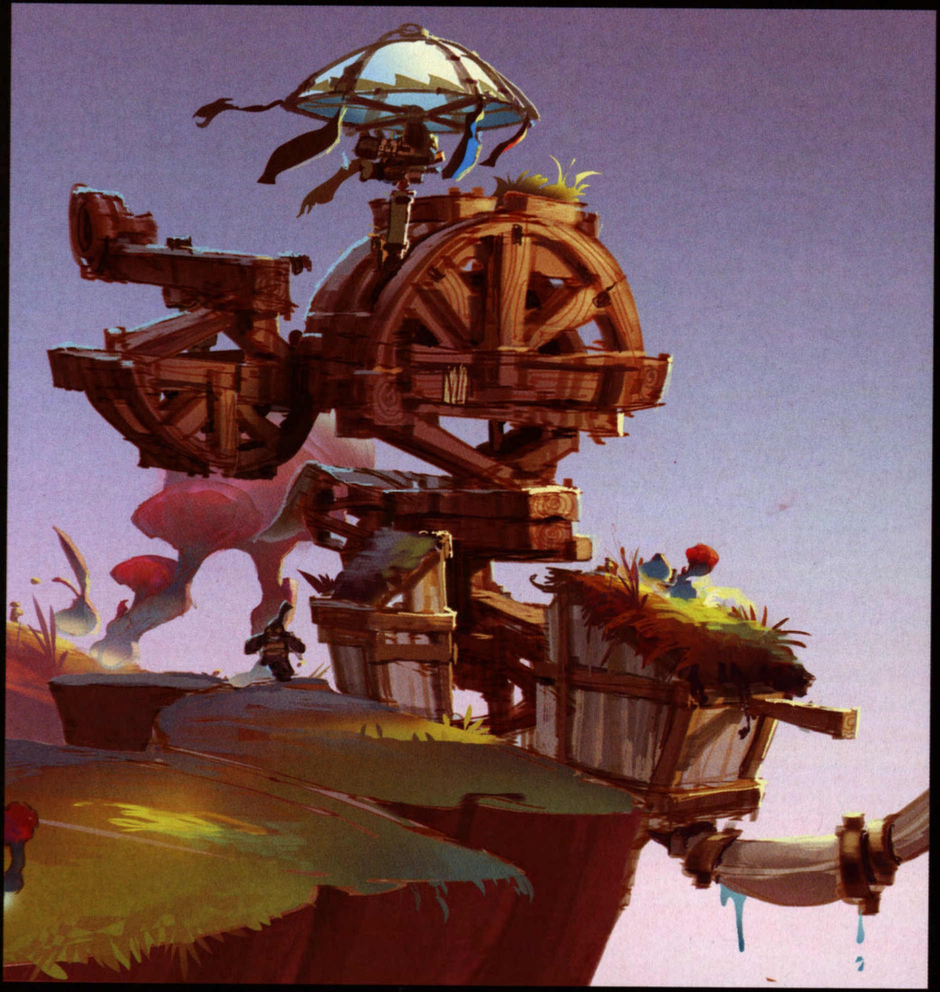


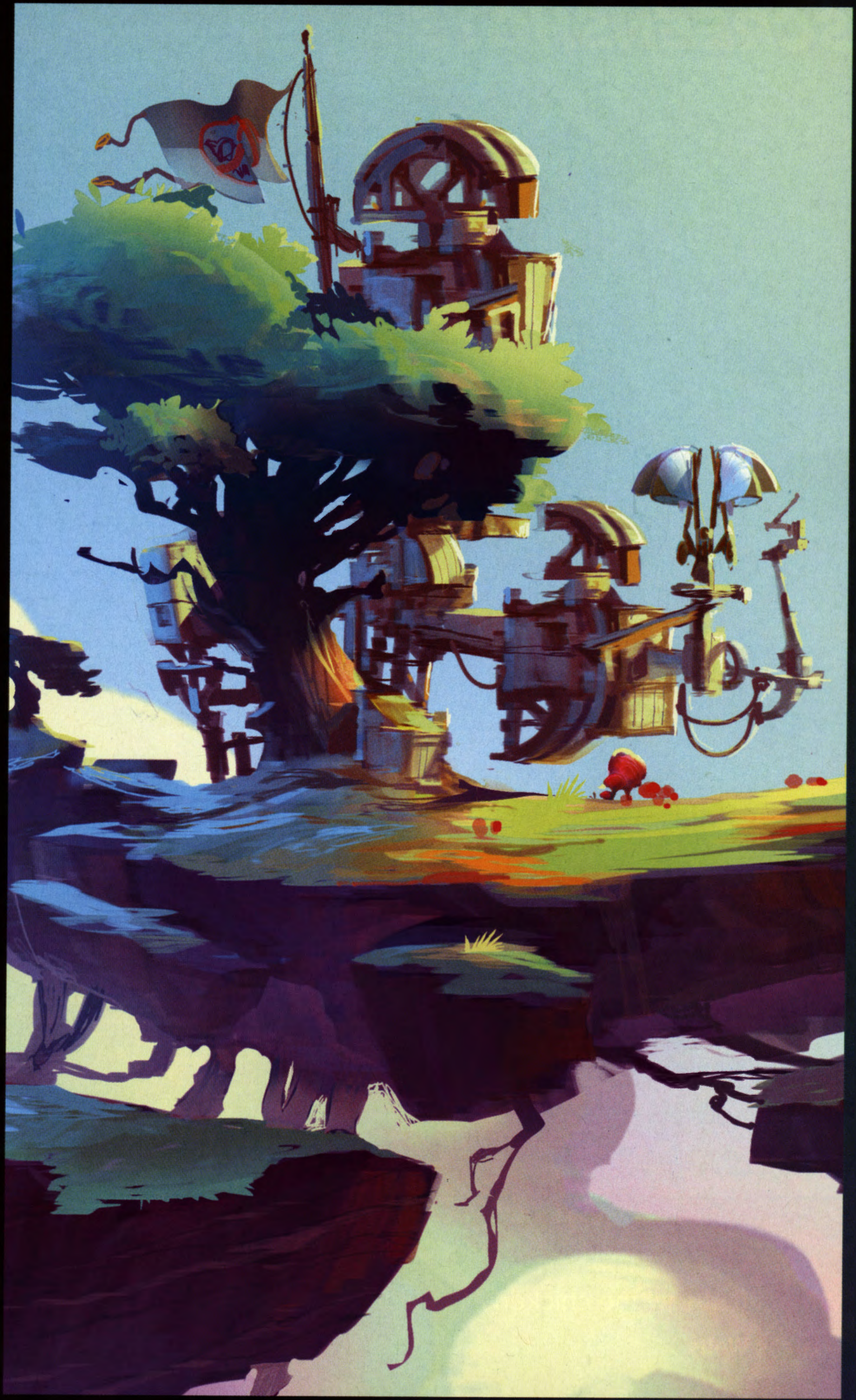
Cap'n Cluck's
Cap'n Cluck's



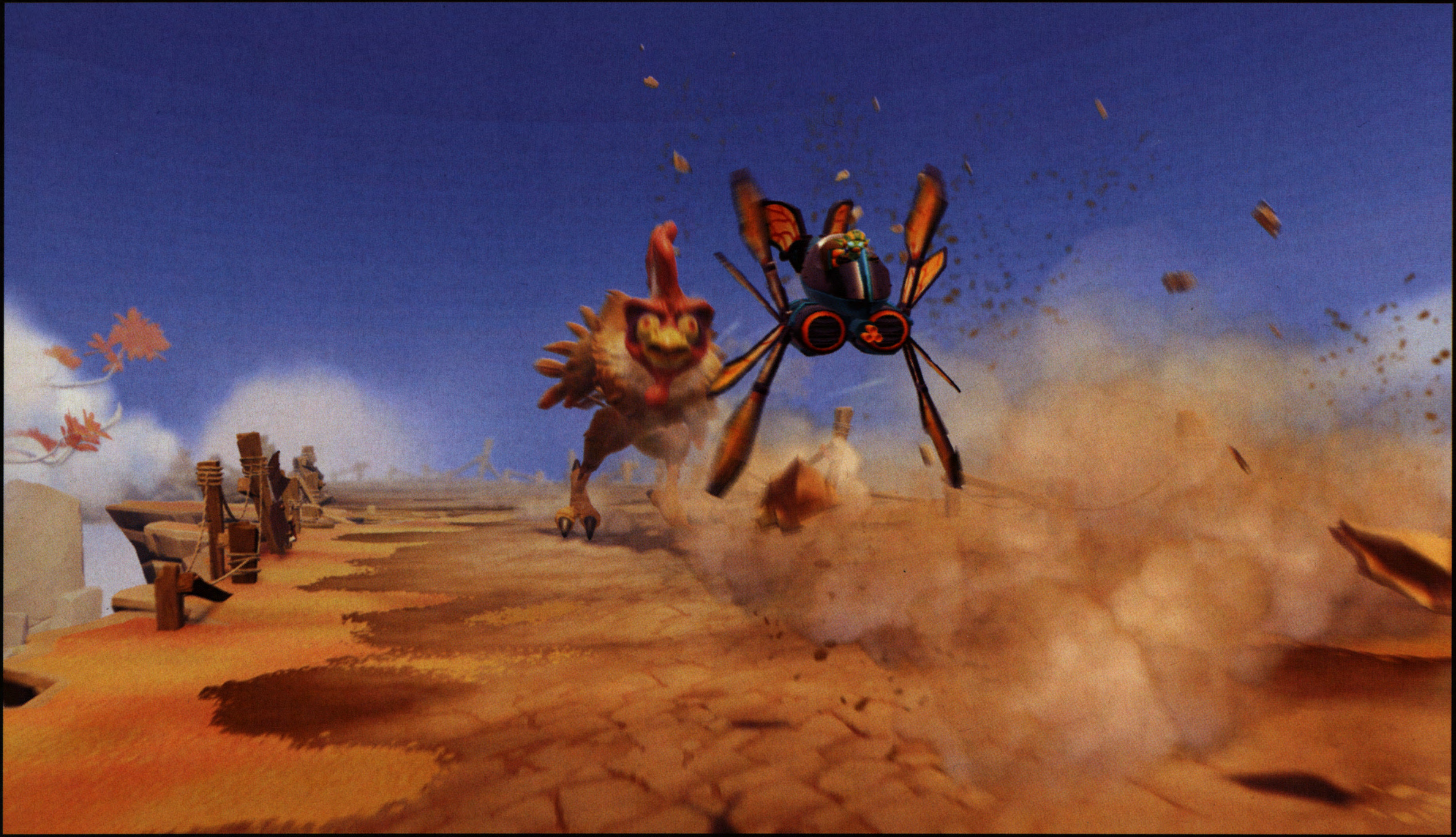








SCREENSHOTS



When I first saw the chickens, I couldn't stop laughing. I hope they show up again in the future.

– Lucas Wells

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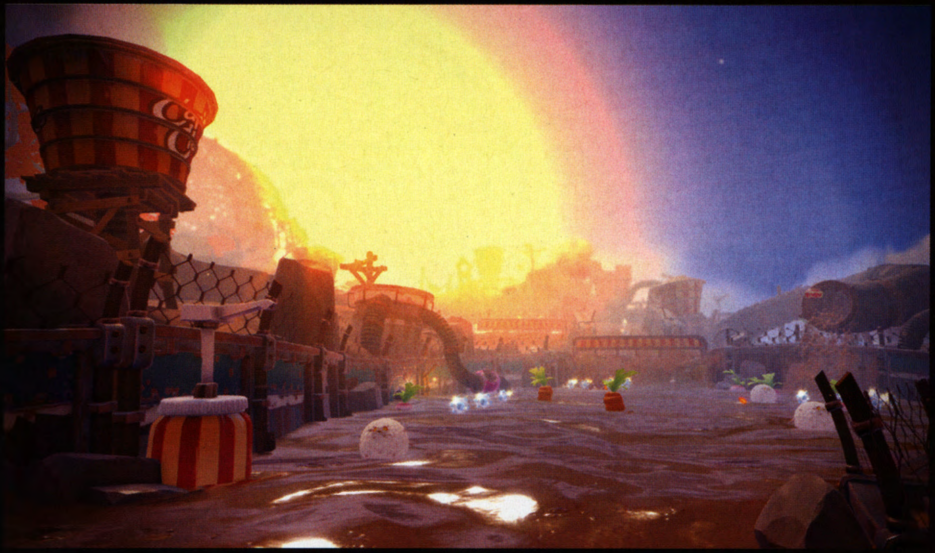
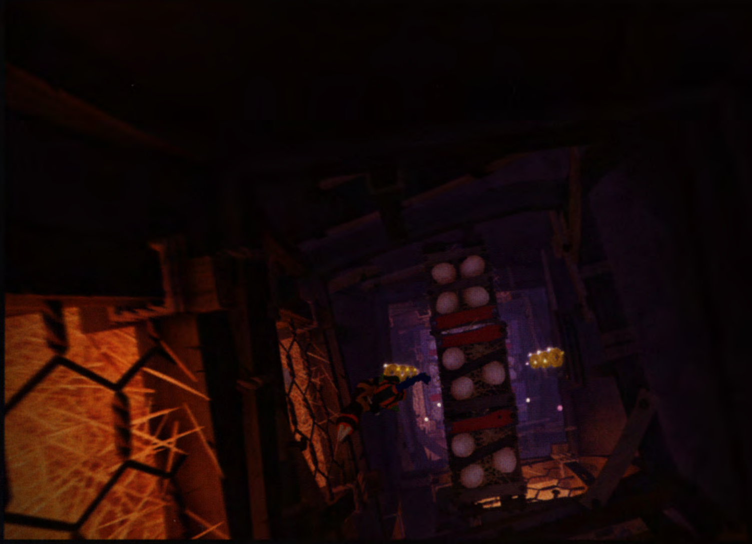
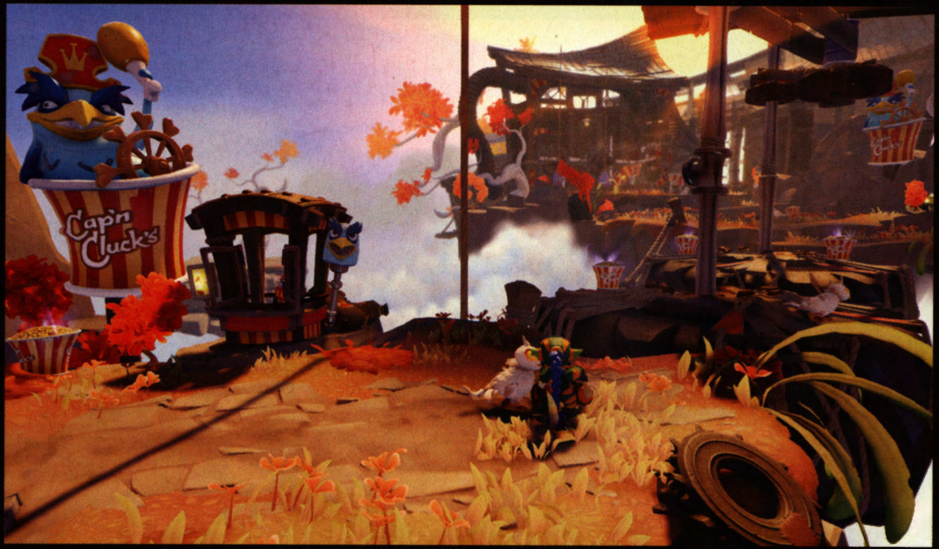
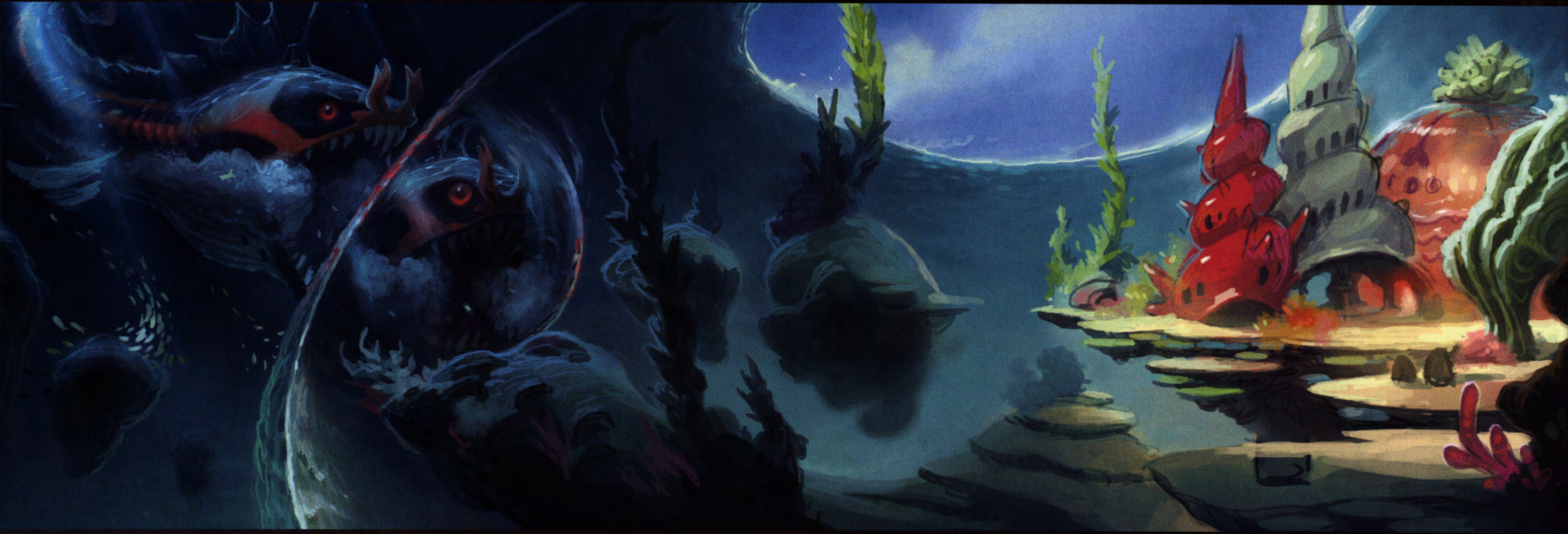






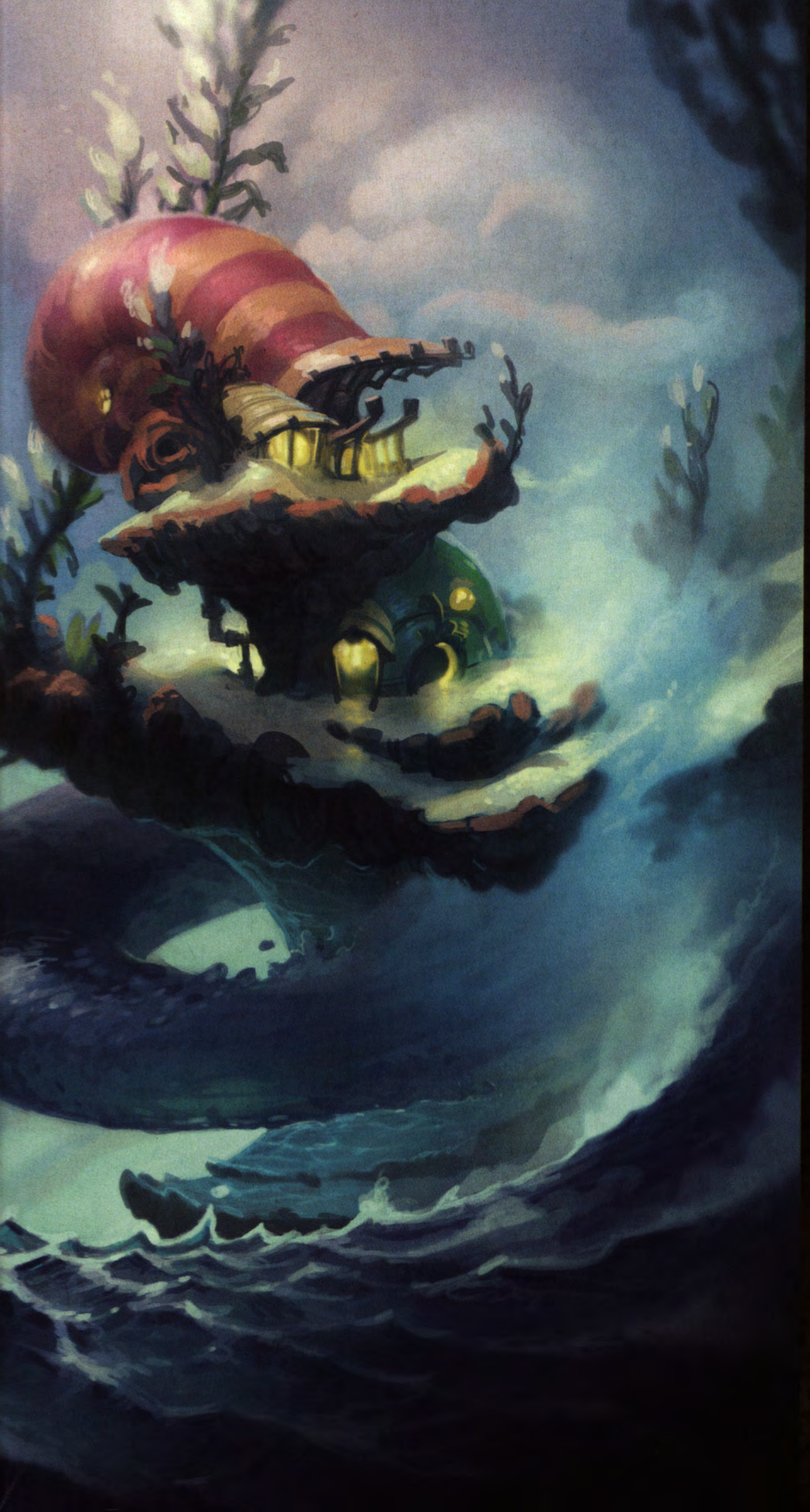
Cap'n Cluck's

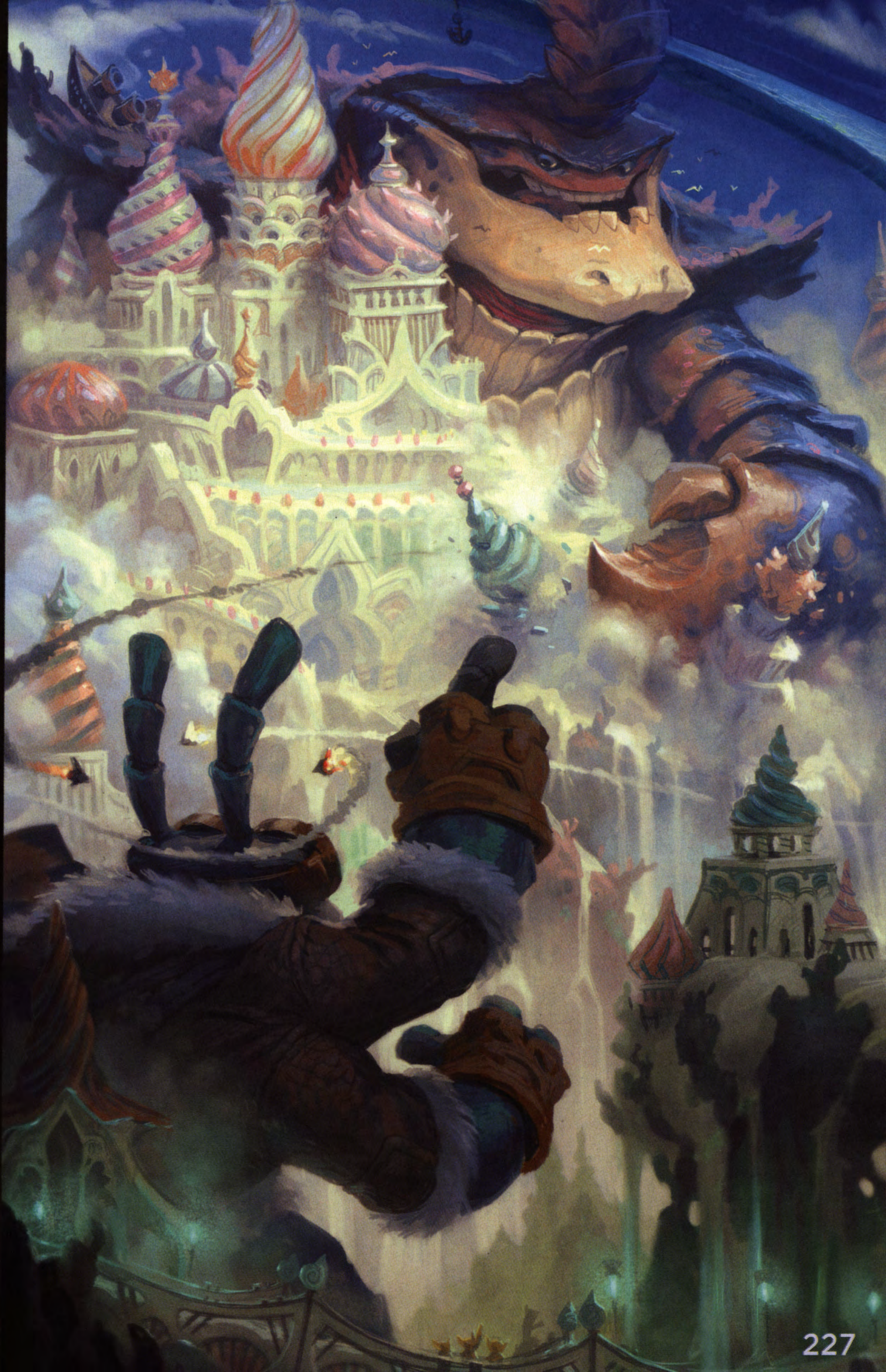
MONSTROUS ISLES

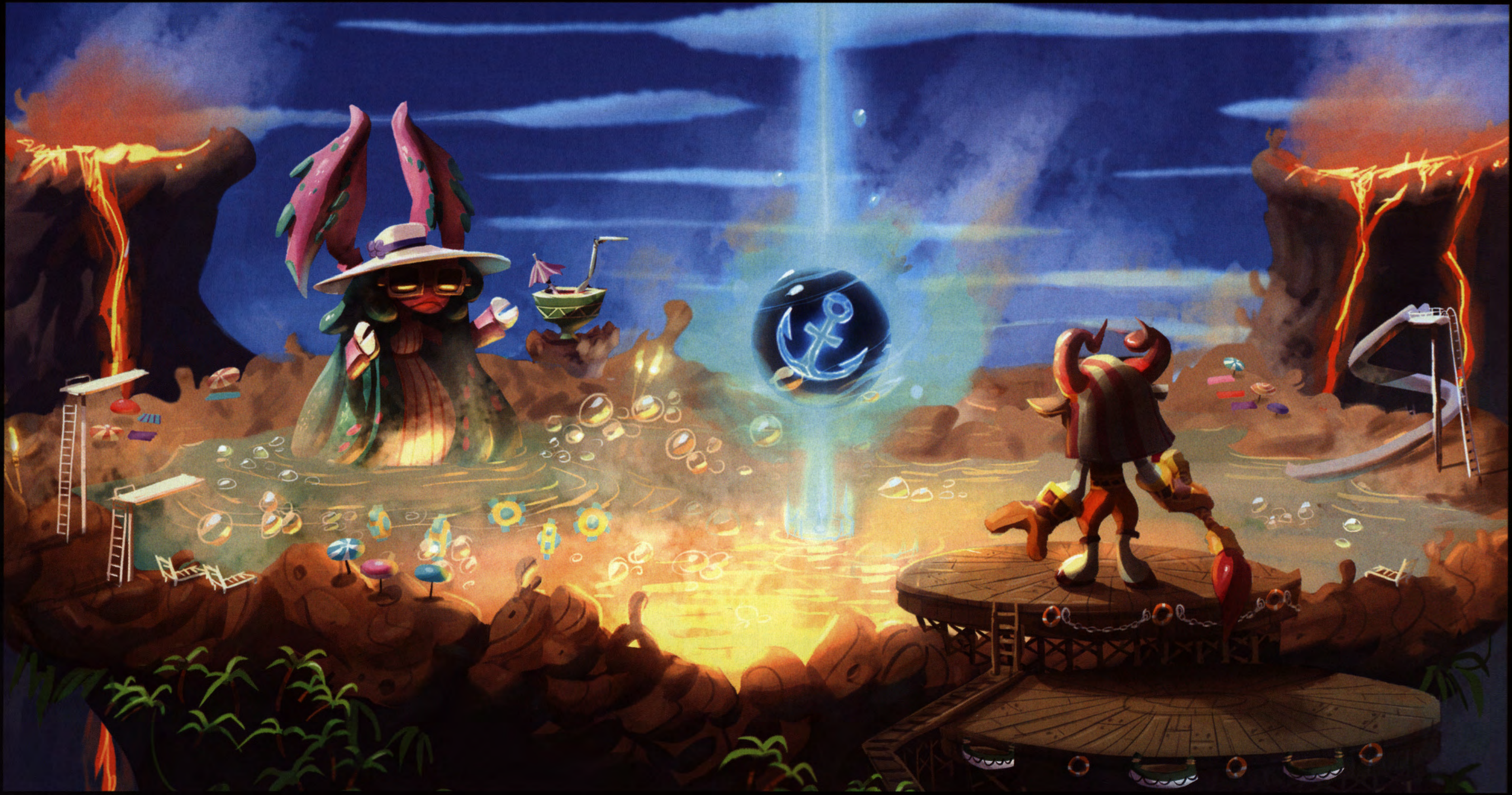


A huge challenge with scale is to sell it using minimal real-world reference objects, since it's Skylands.

– Brent Gibson

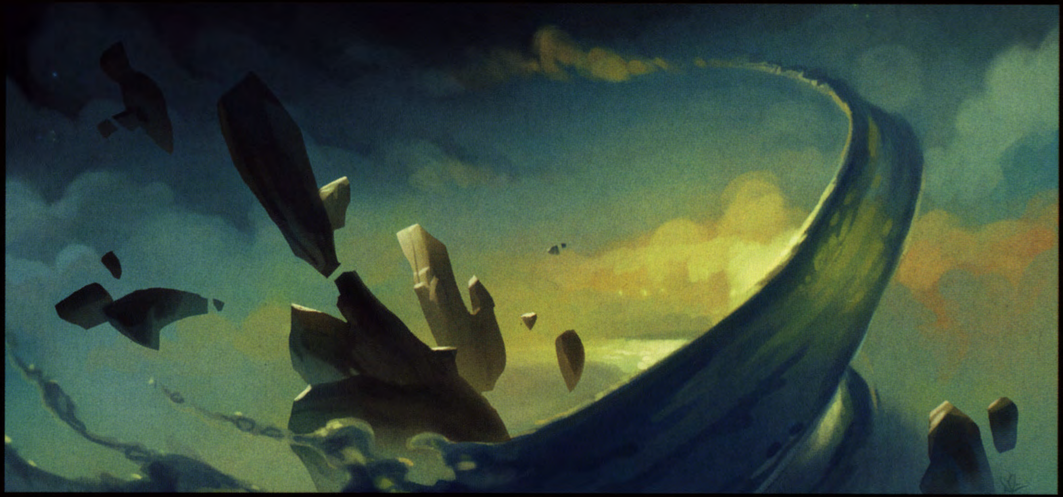


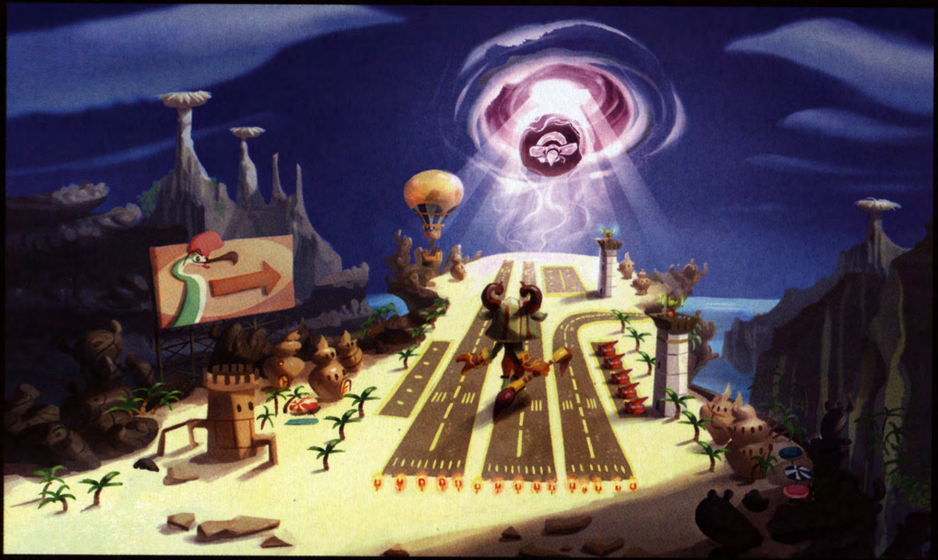


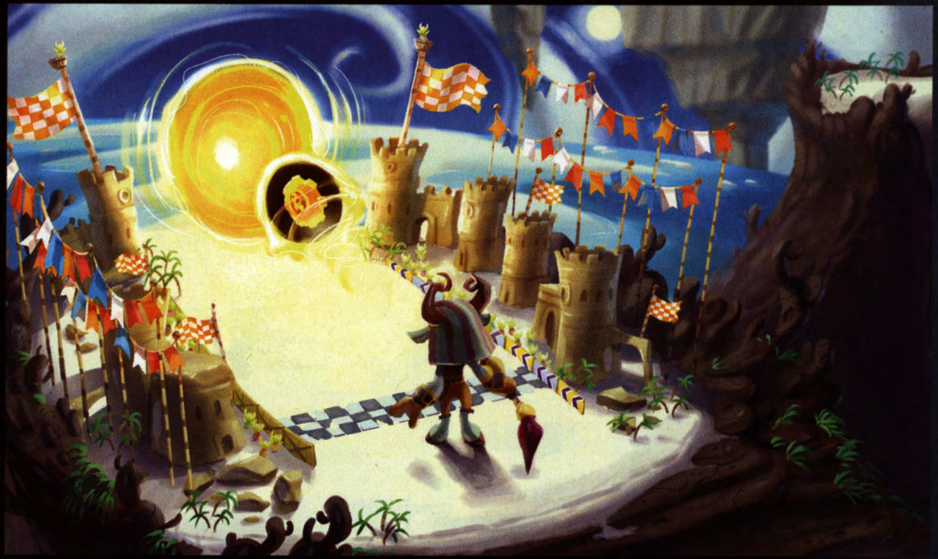


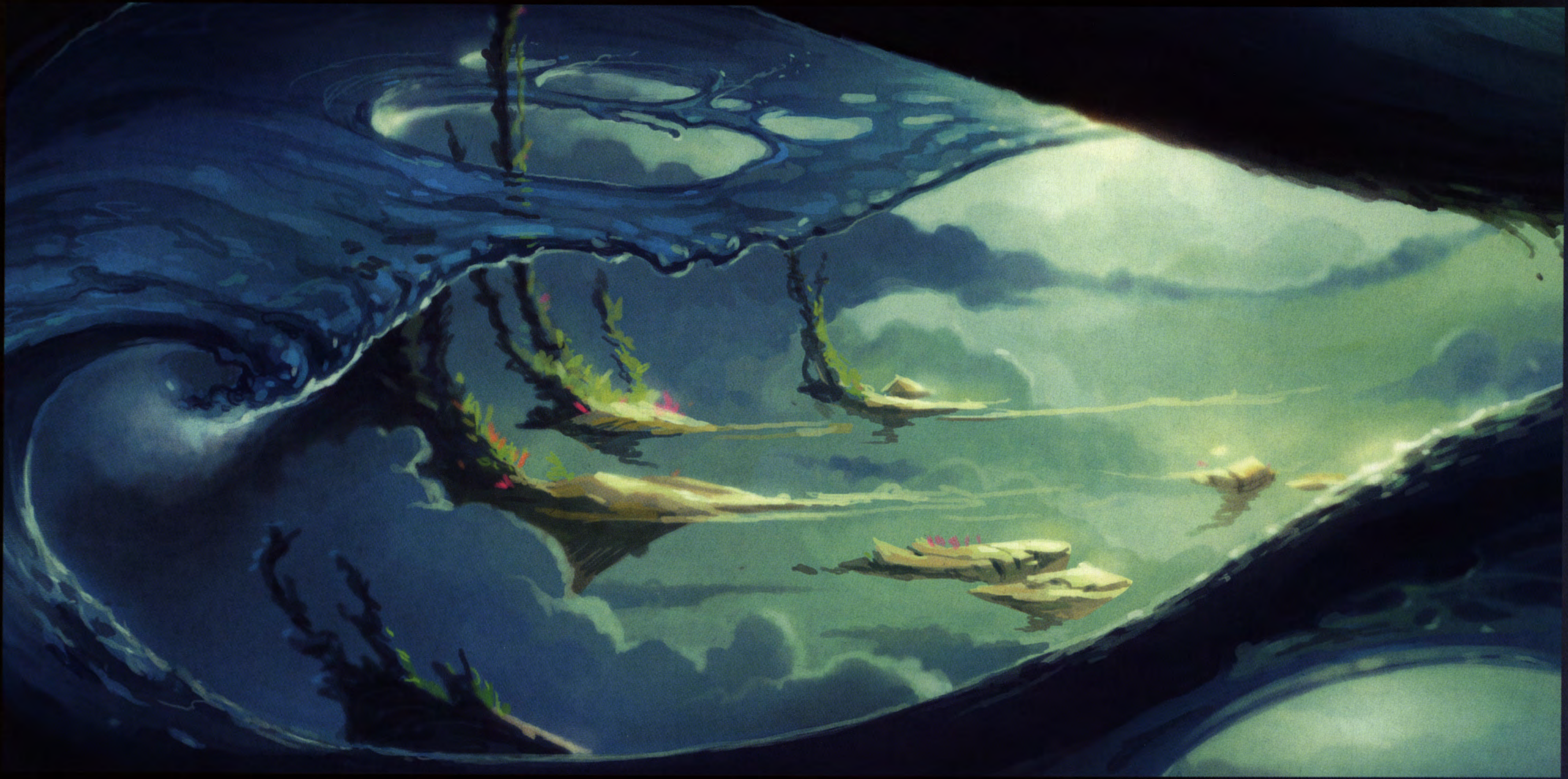
Seeing all the wonderfully made Titans always brings a smile to my face.

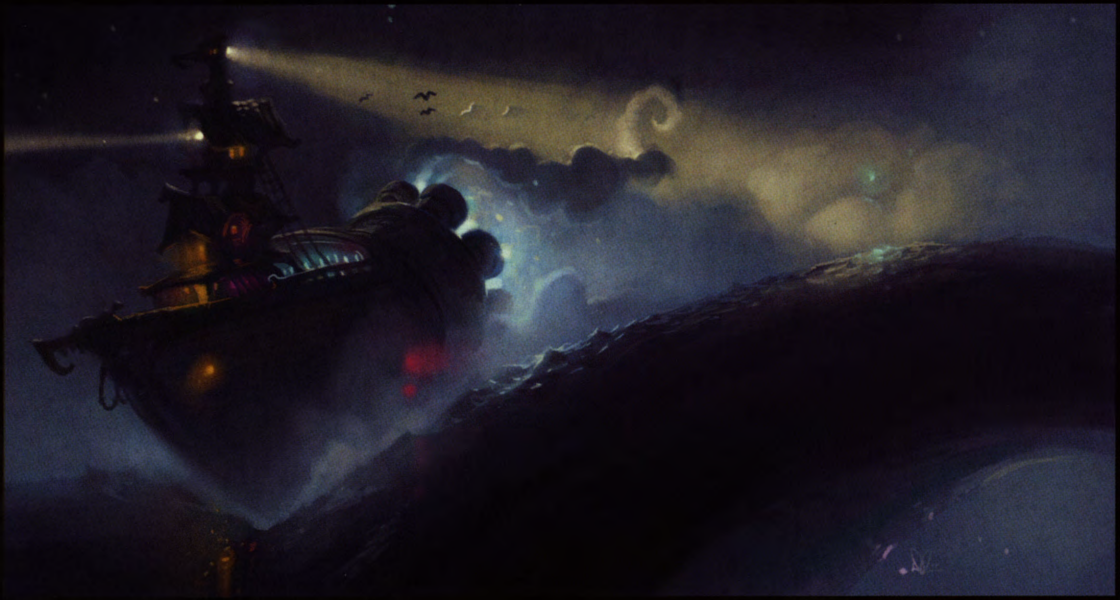
– Matt Surdej

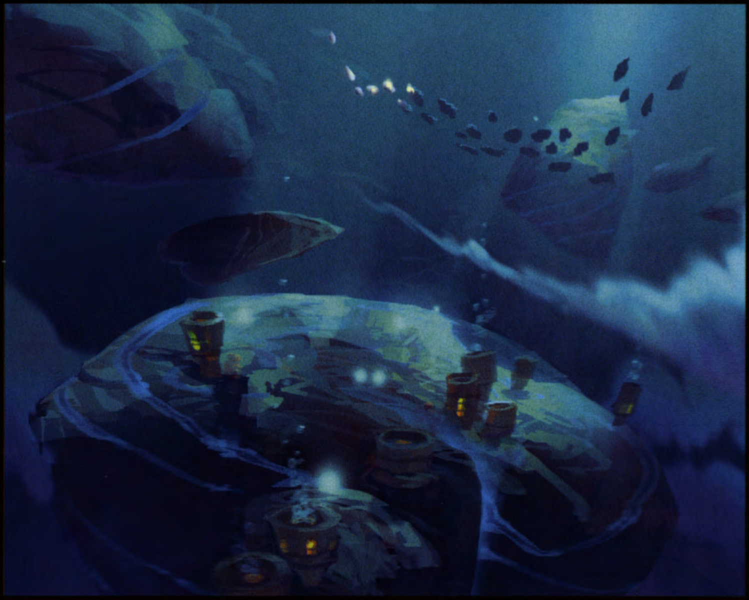


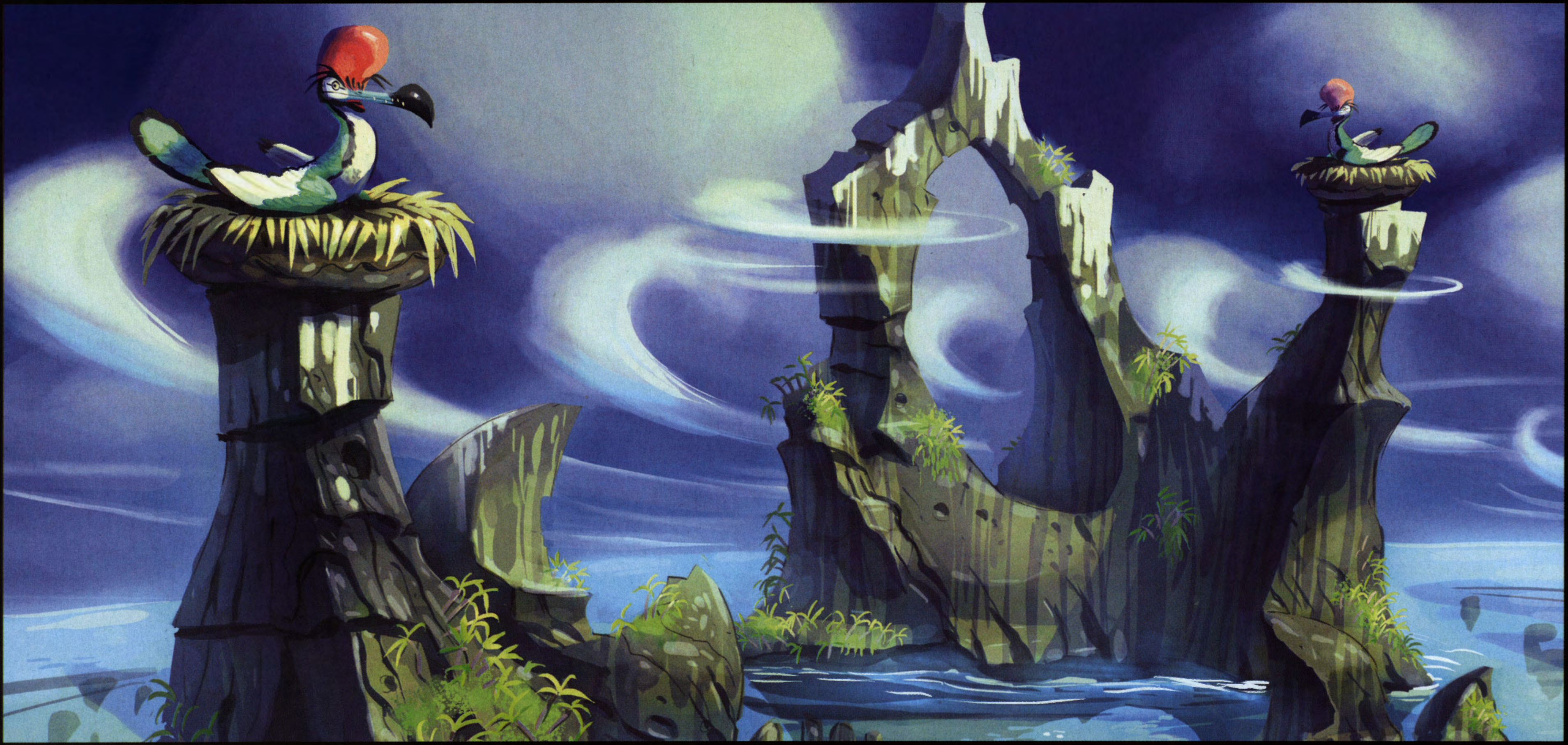


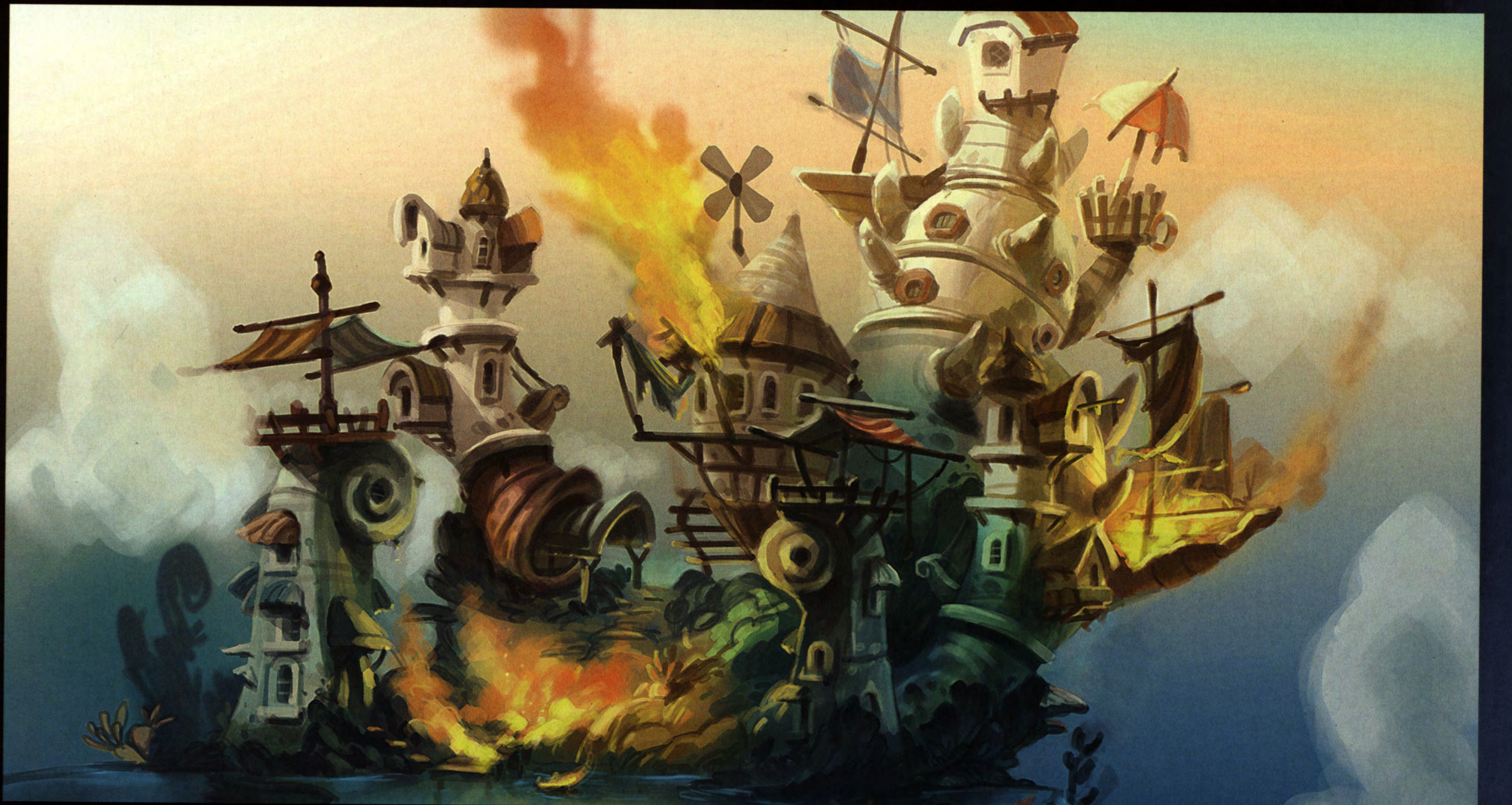


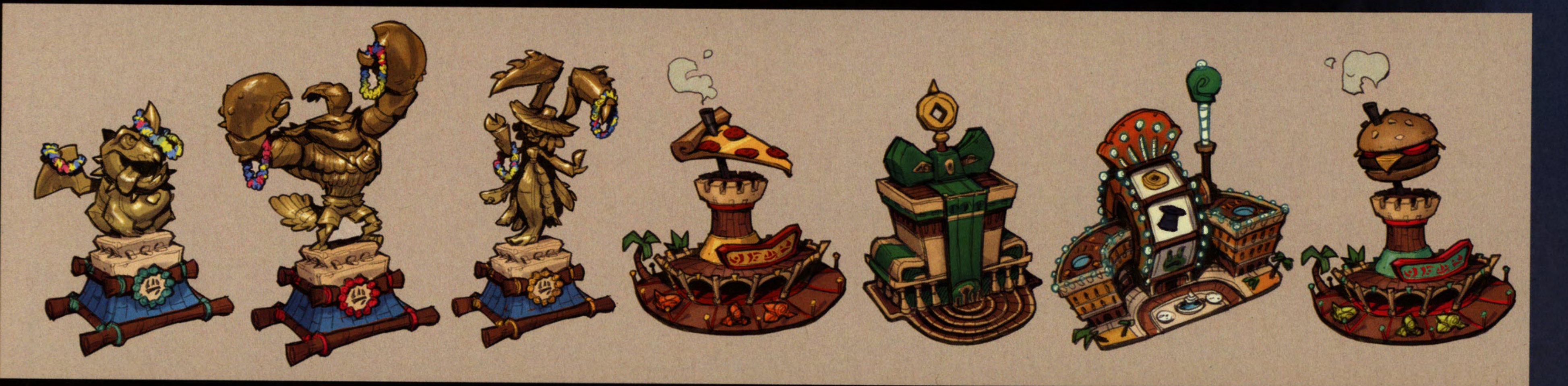


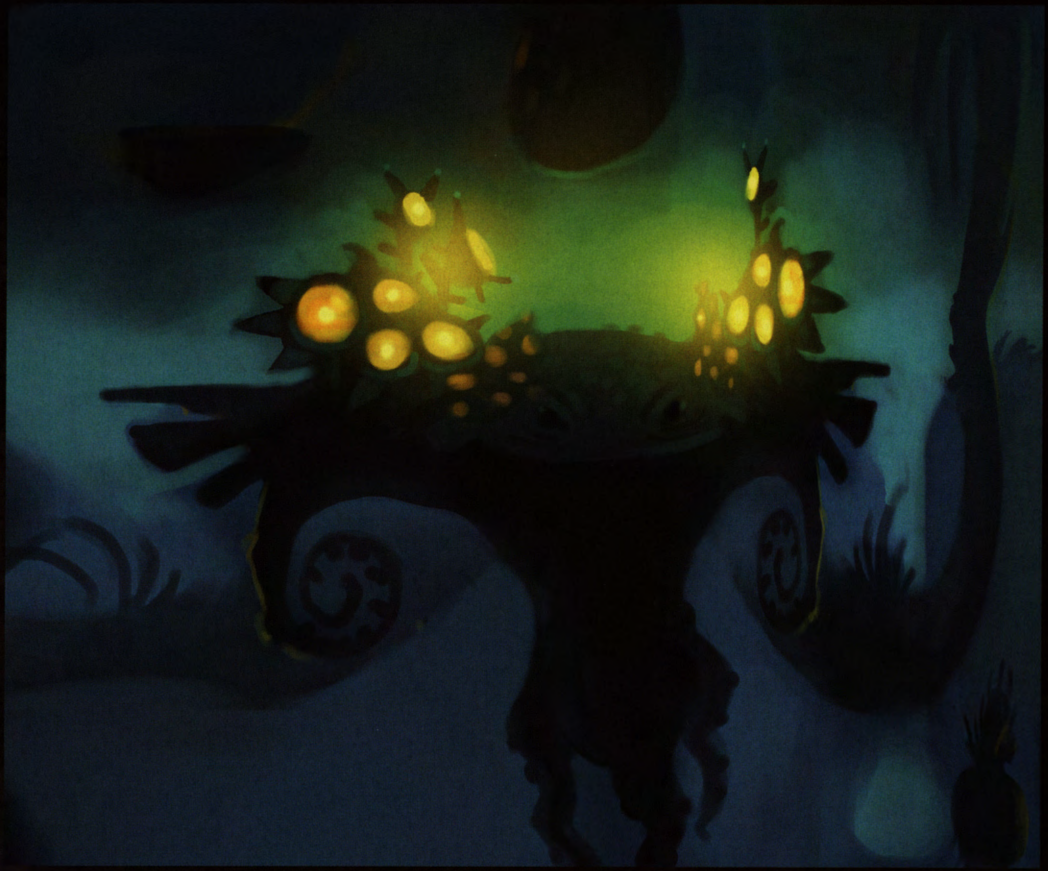


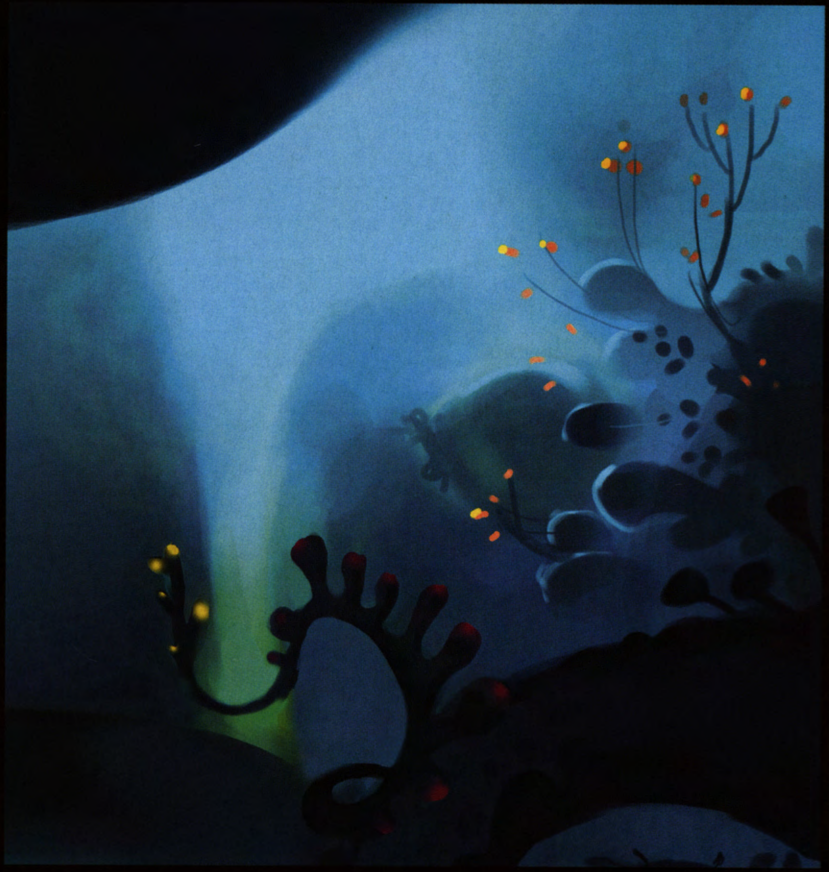


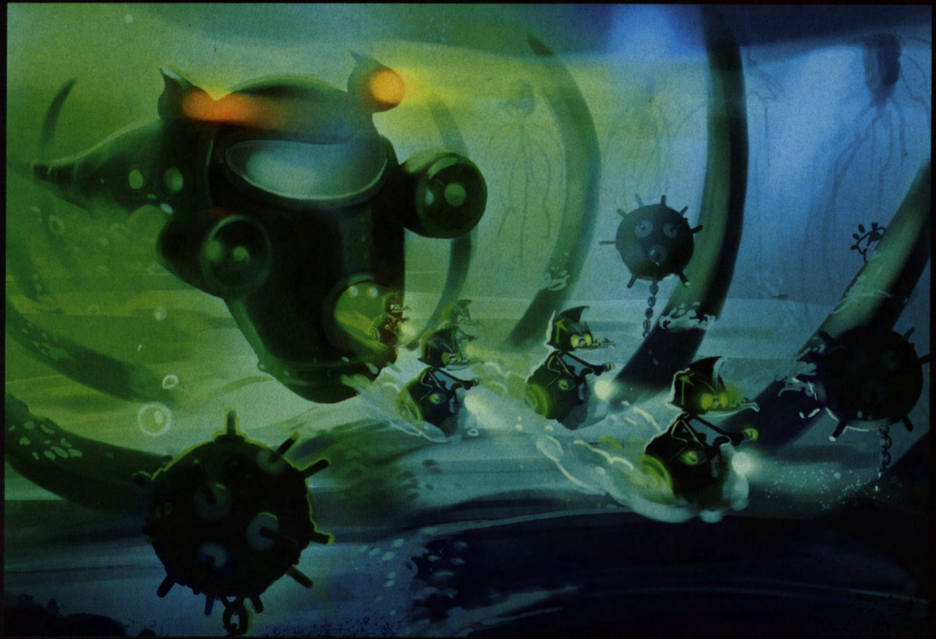


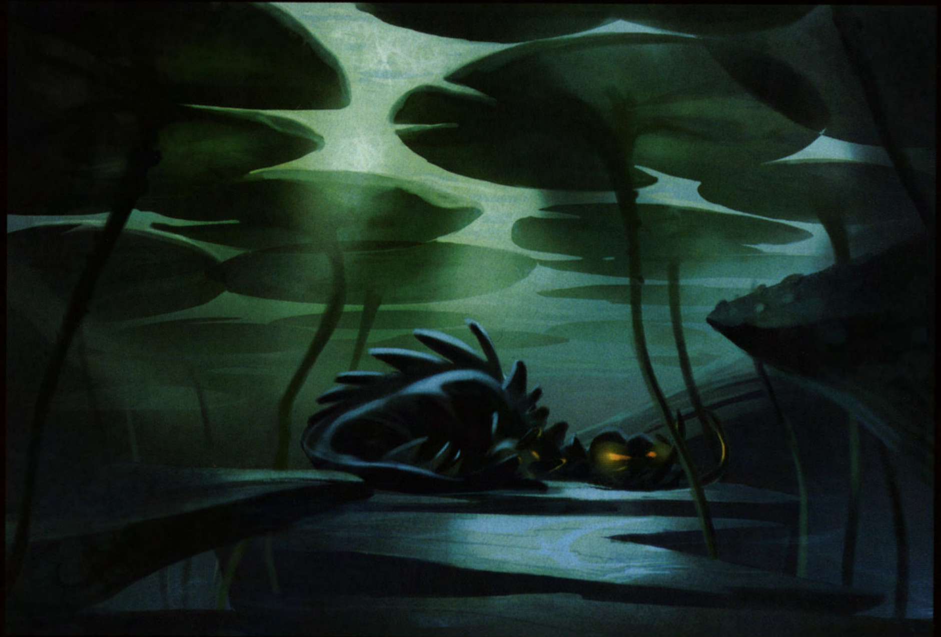


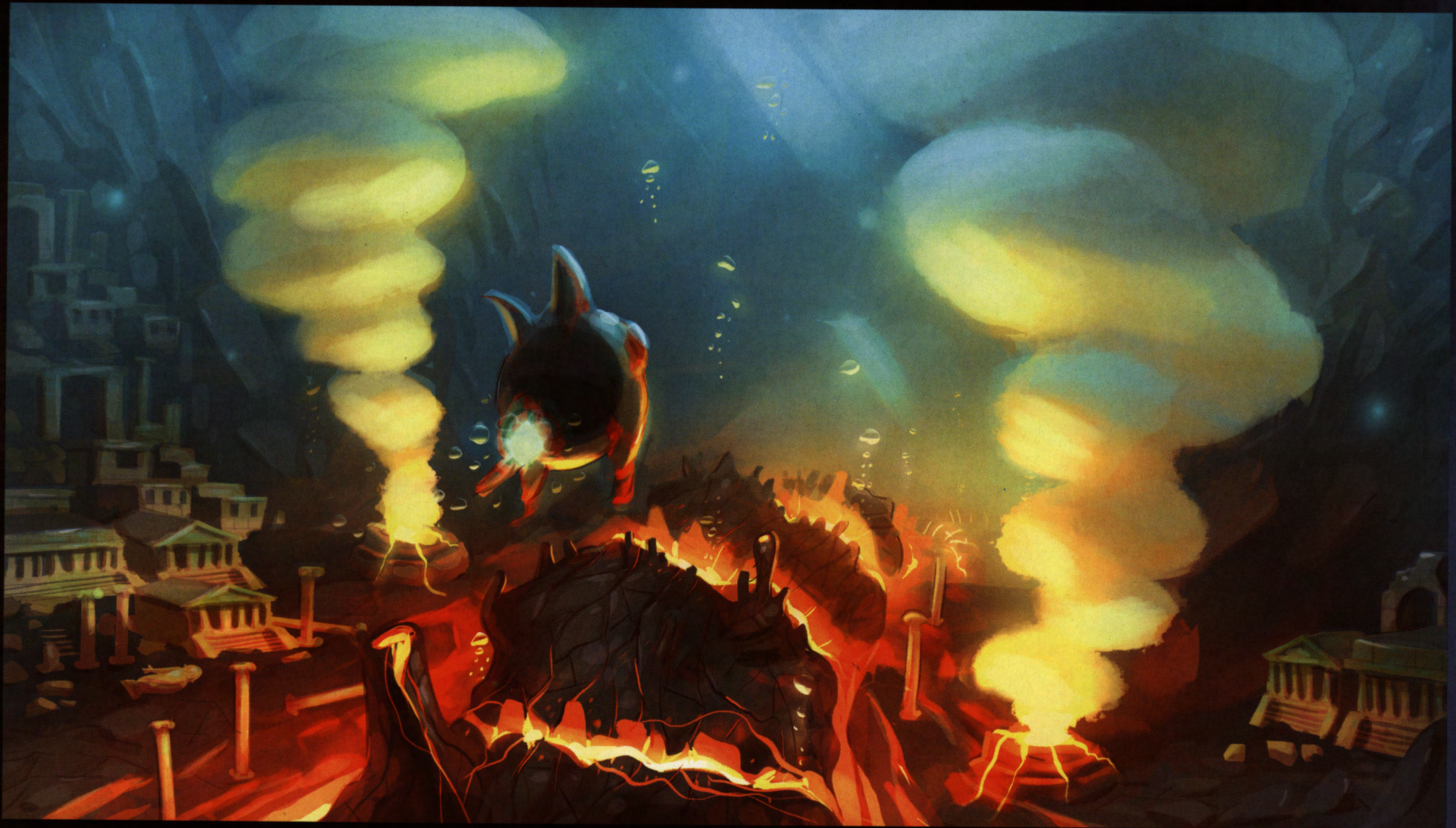




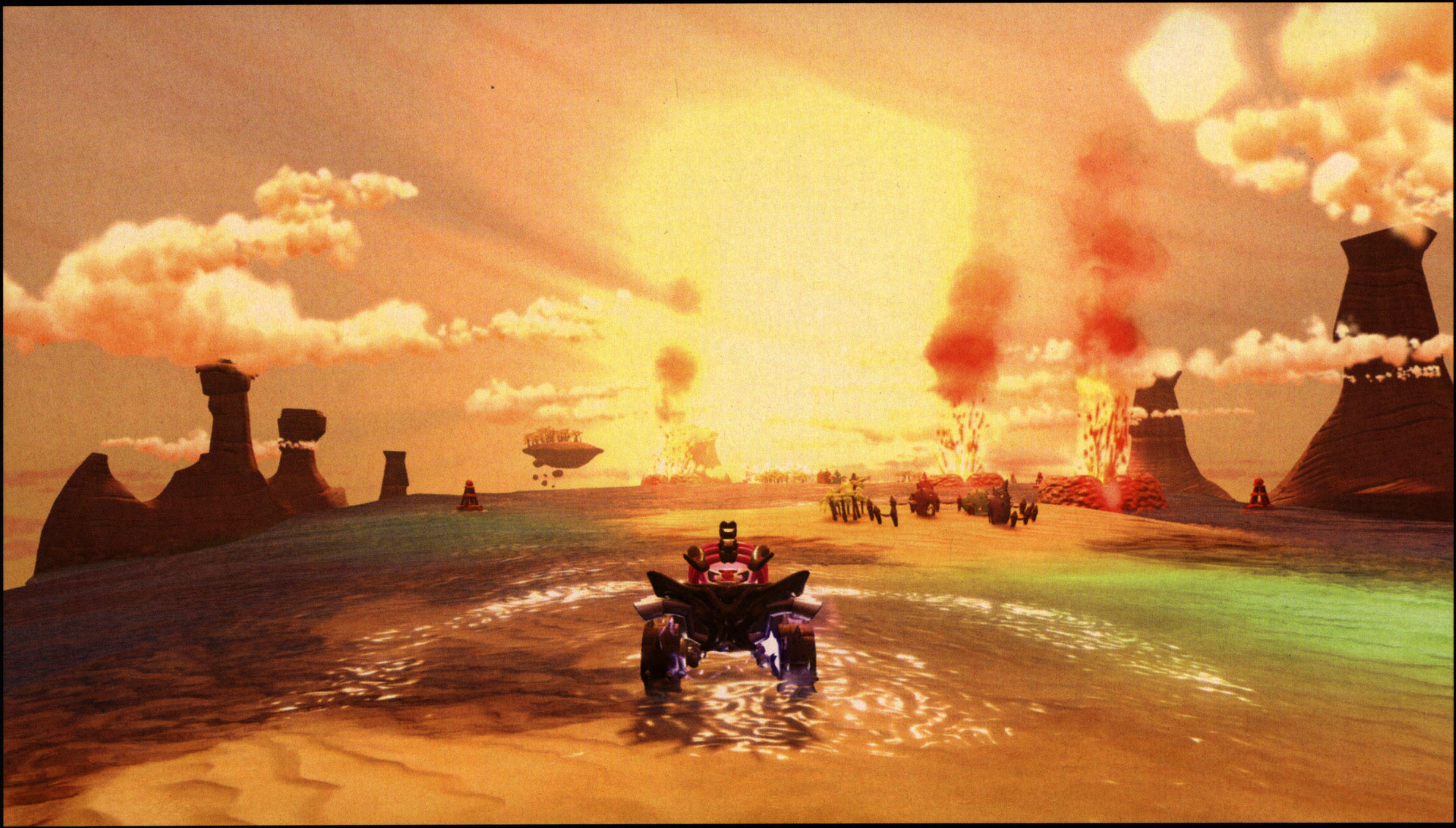




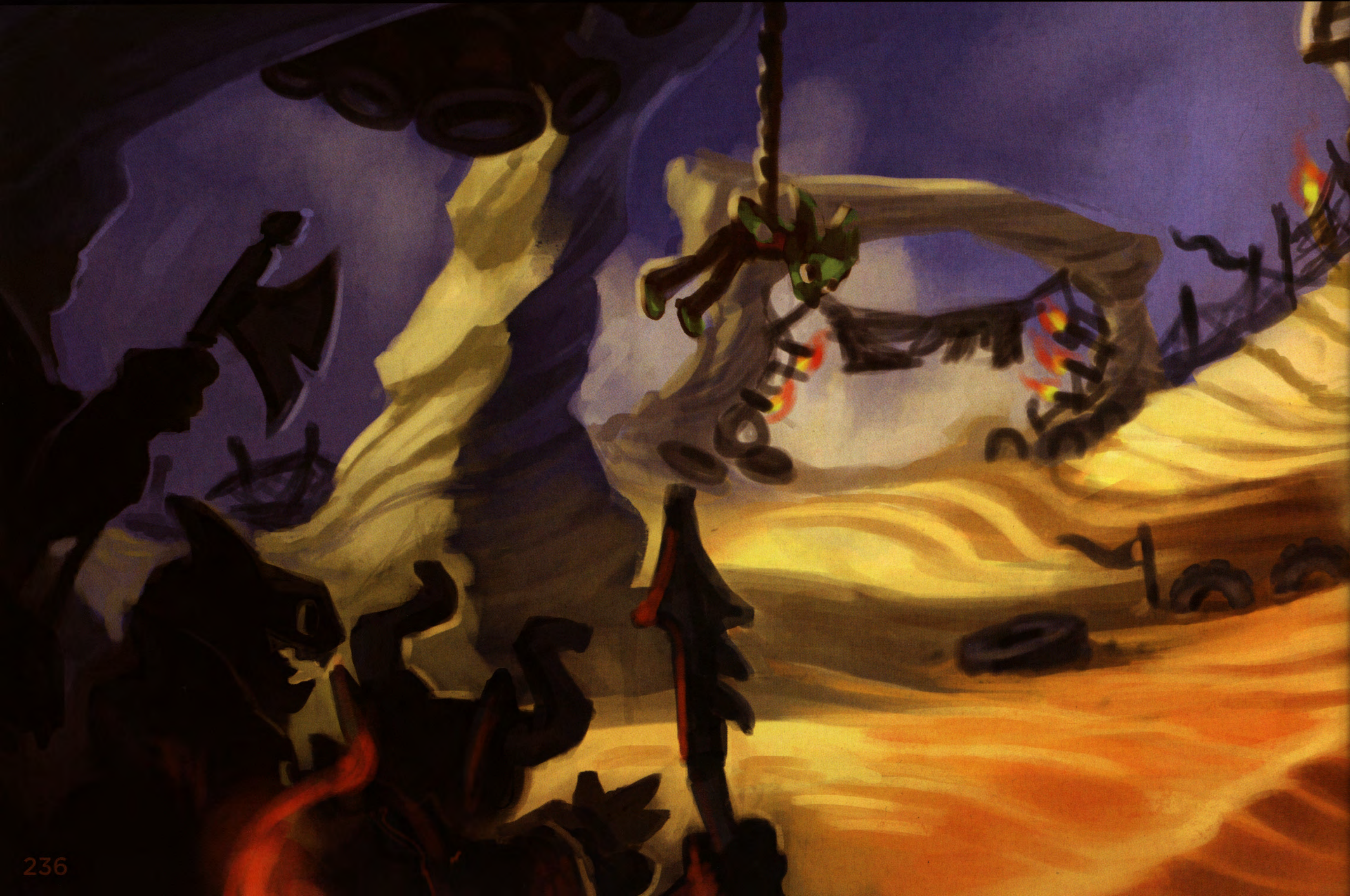




SCREENSHOTS

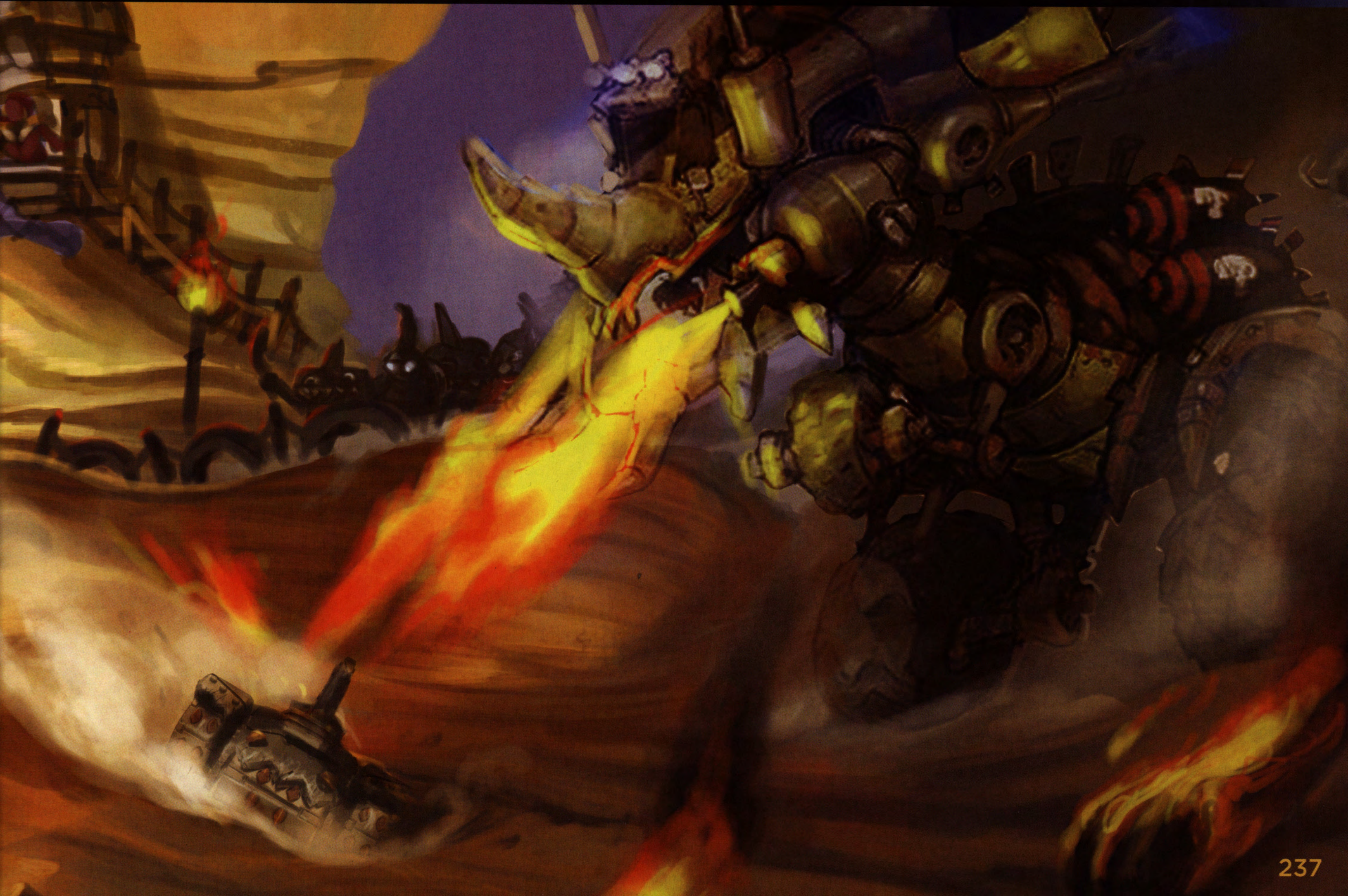


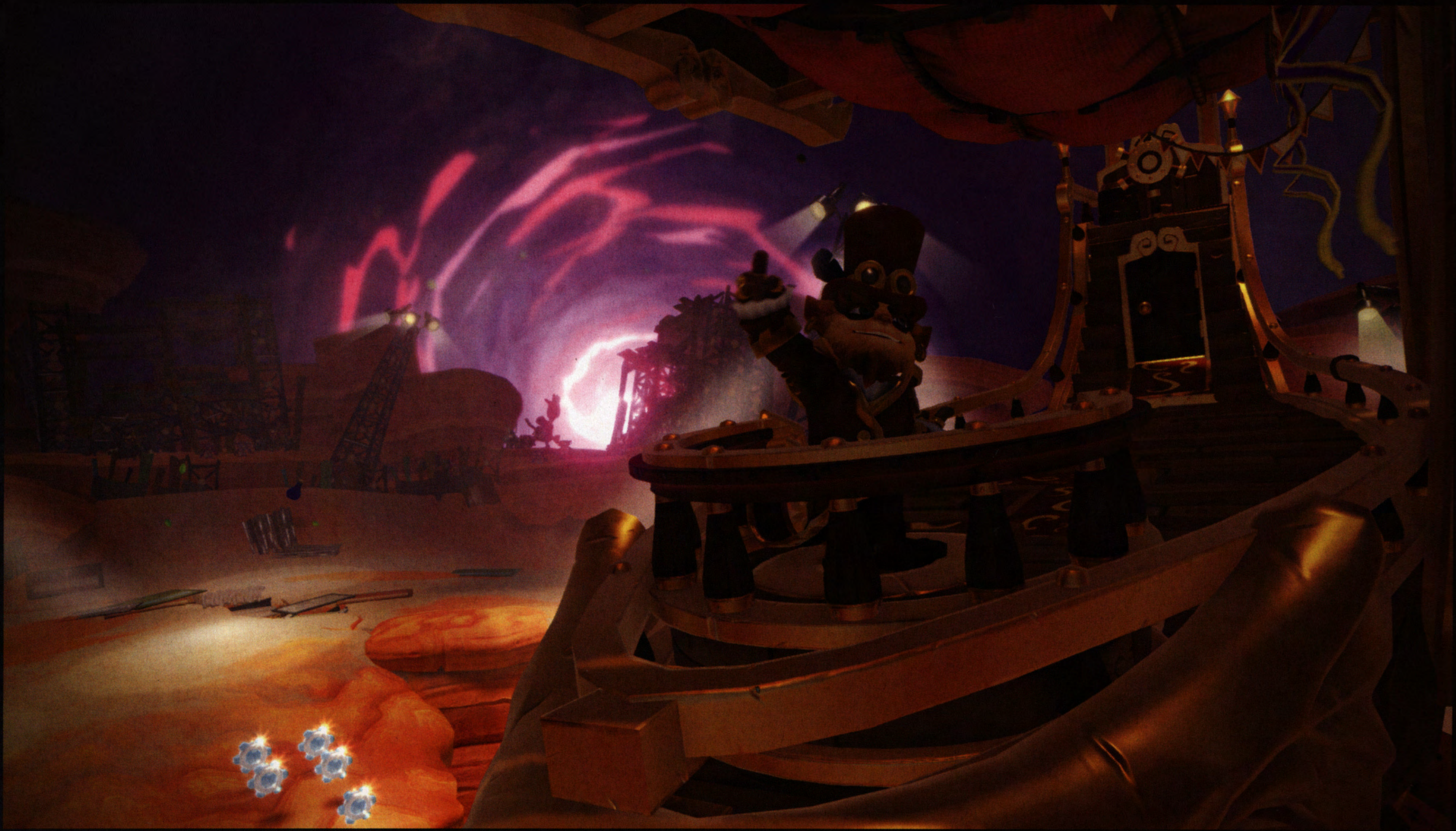
RIDEPOCALYPSE DEMOLITION DERBY

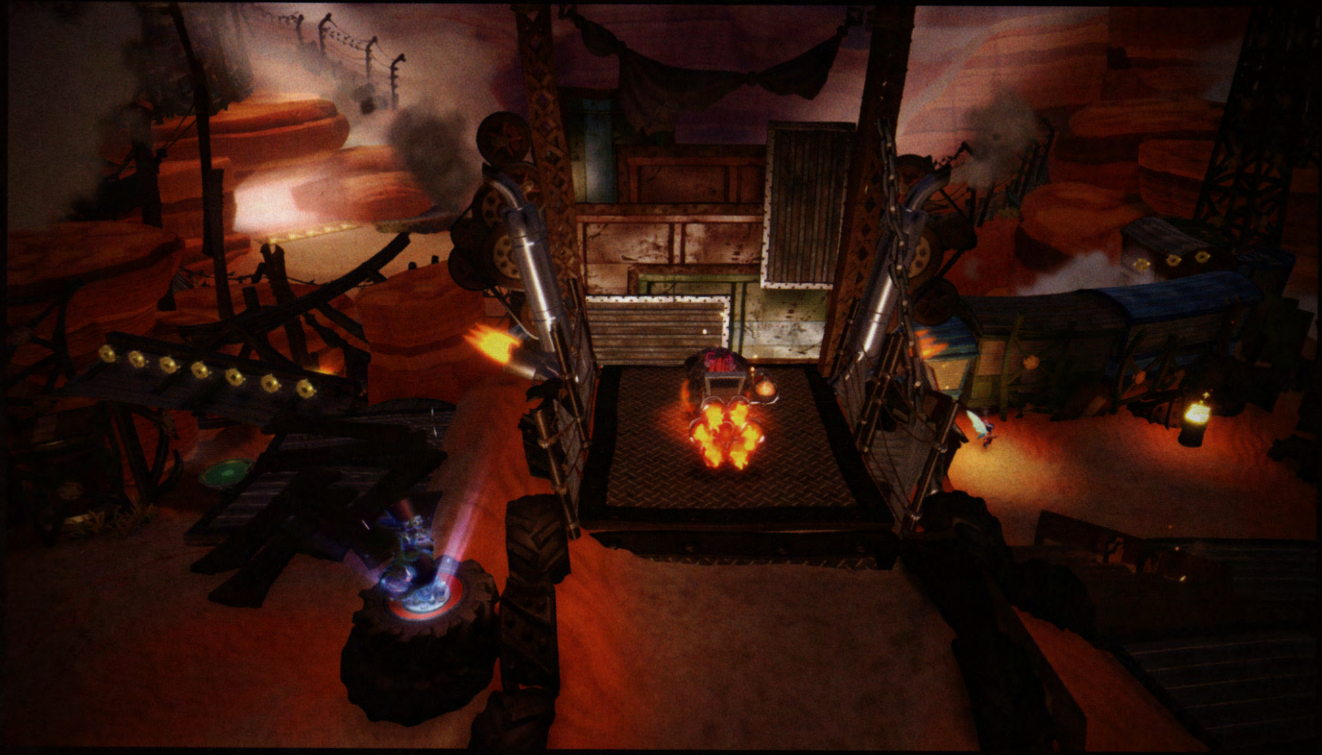


What kid doesn't want to fight against a giant dinosaur-vehicle monster that spits fire? Right?!

– Buck Chantel



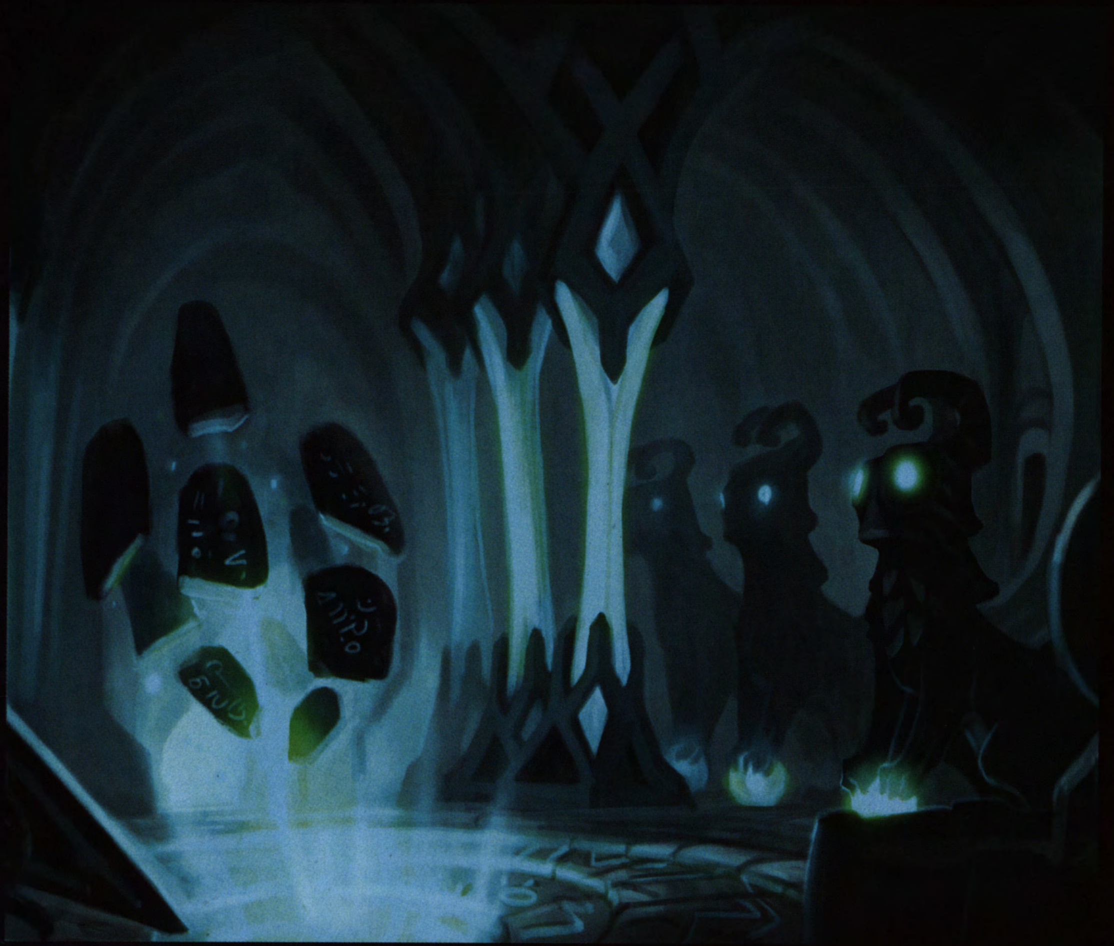


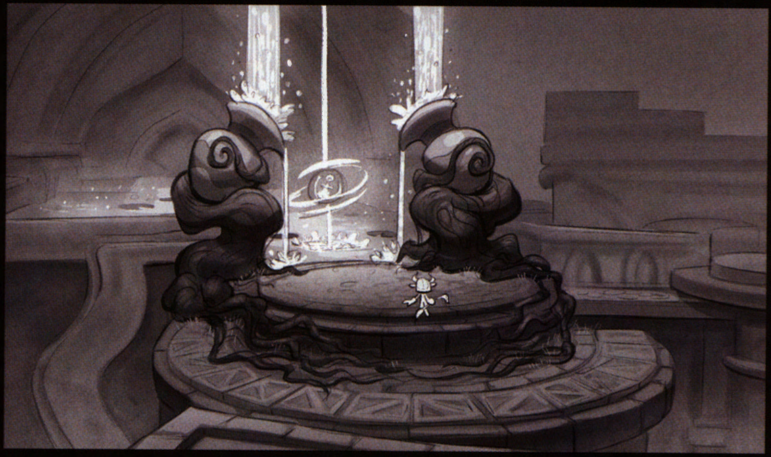


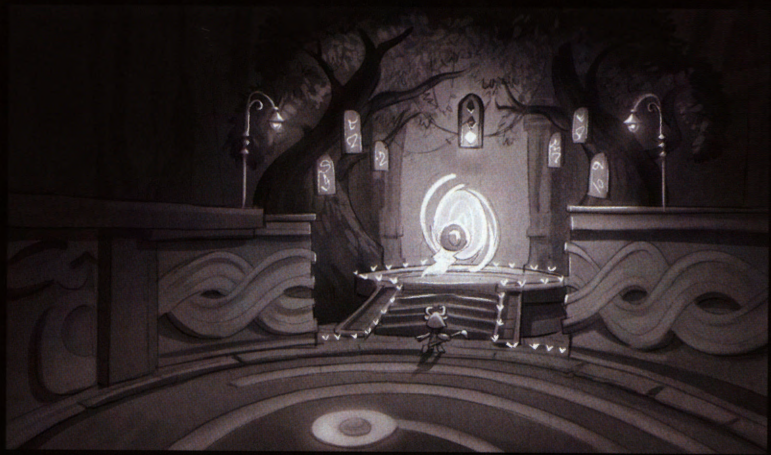
I enjoyed the freedom to help express the humor and the narrative, whether it was a bird colliding with a mesa rock face or placing the player tooth-to-tooth with a prehistoric mechanical monster... all to win the hand of the not-so-beautiful Glumshanks!

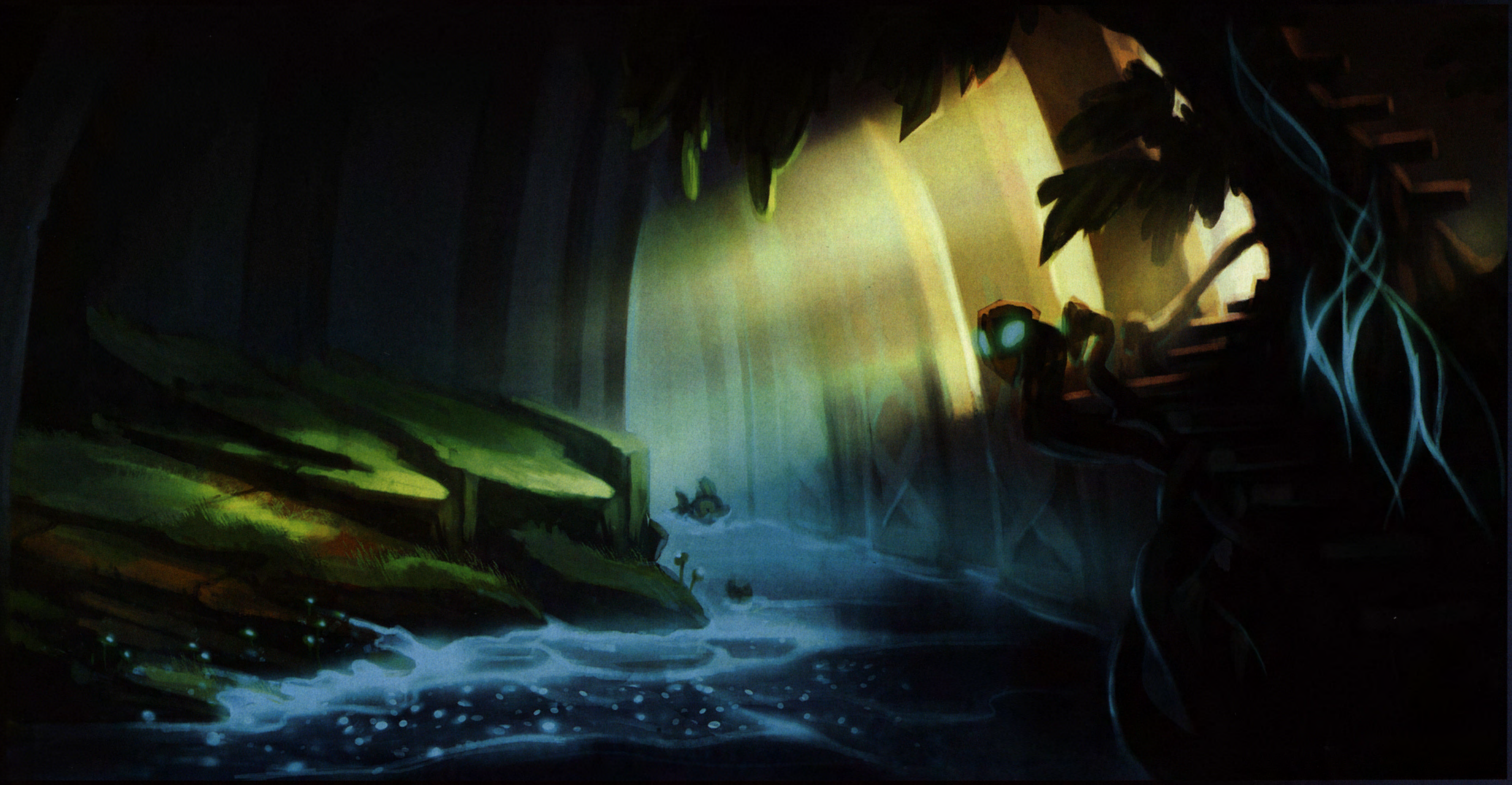
– Paul Dunstan

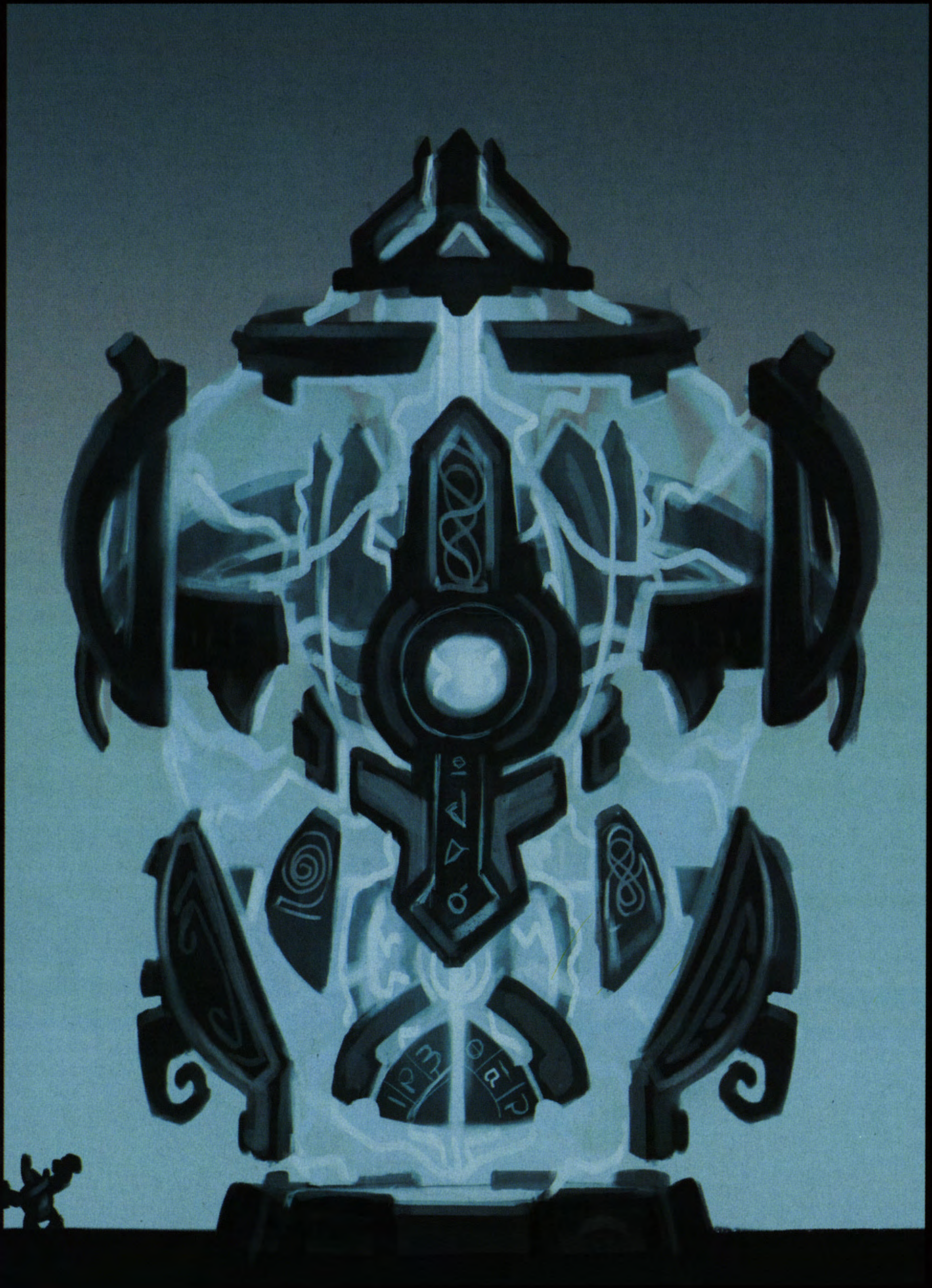
VAULT OF THE ANCIENTS

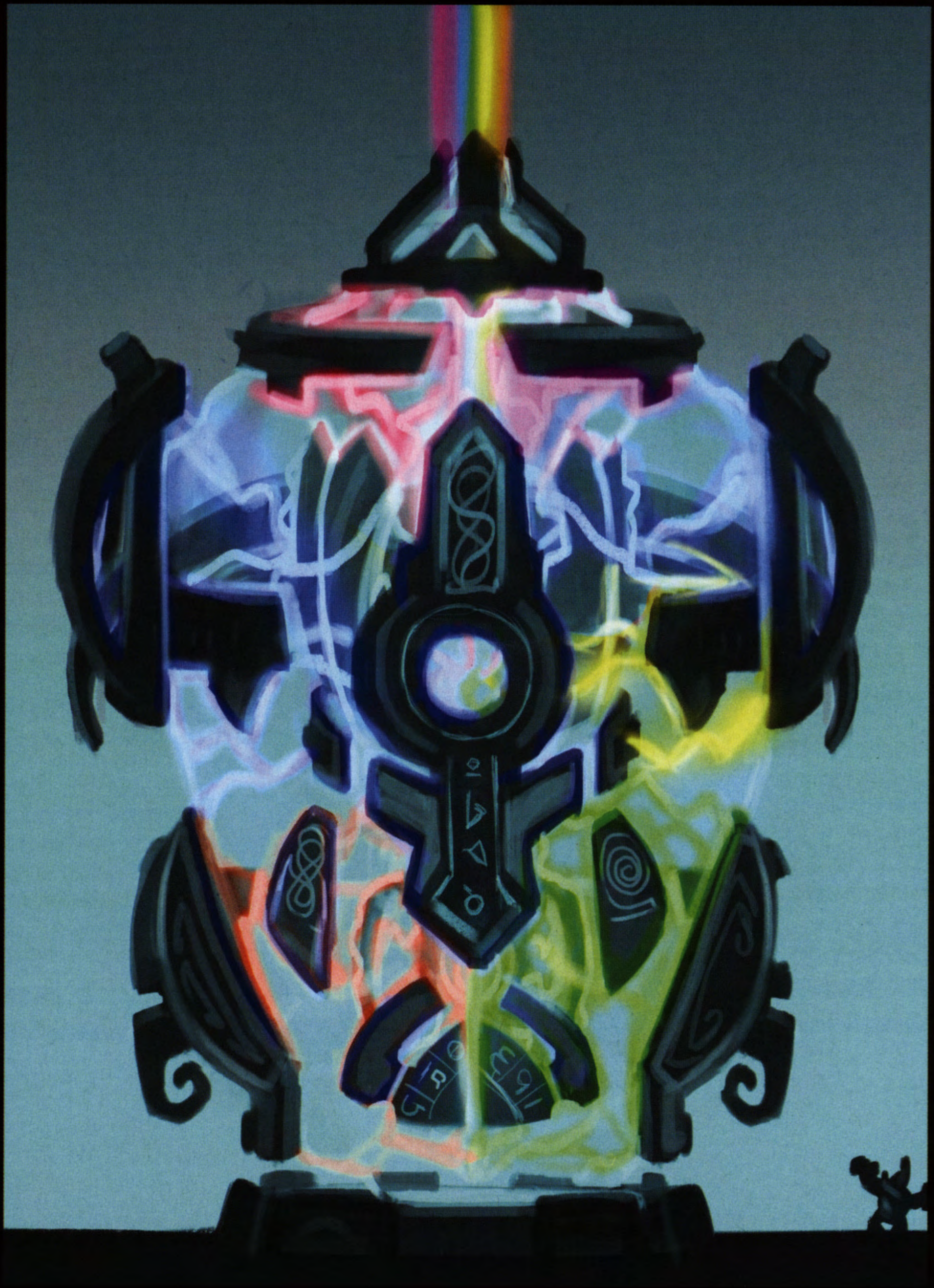


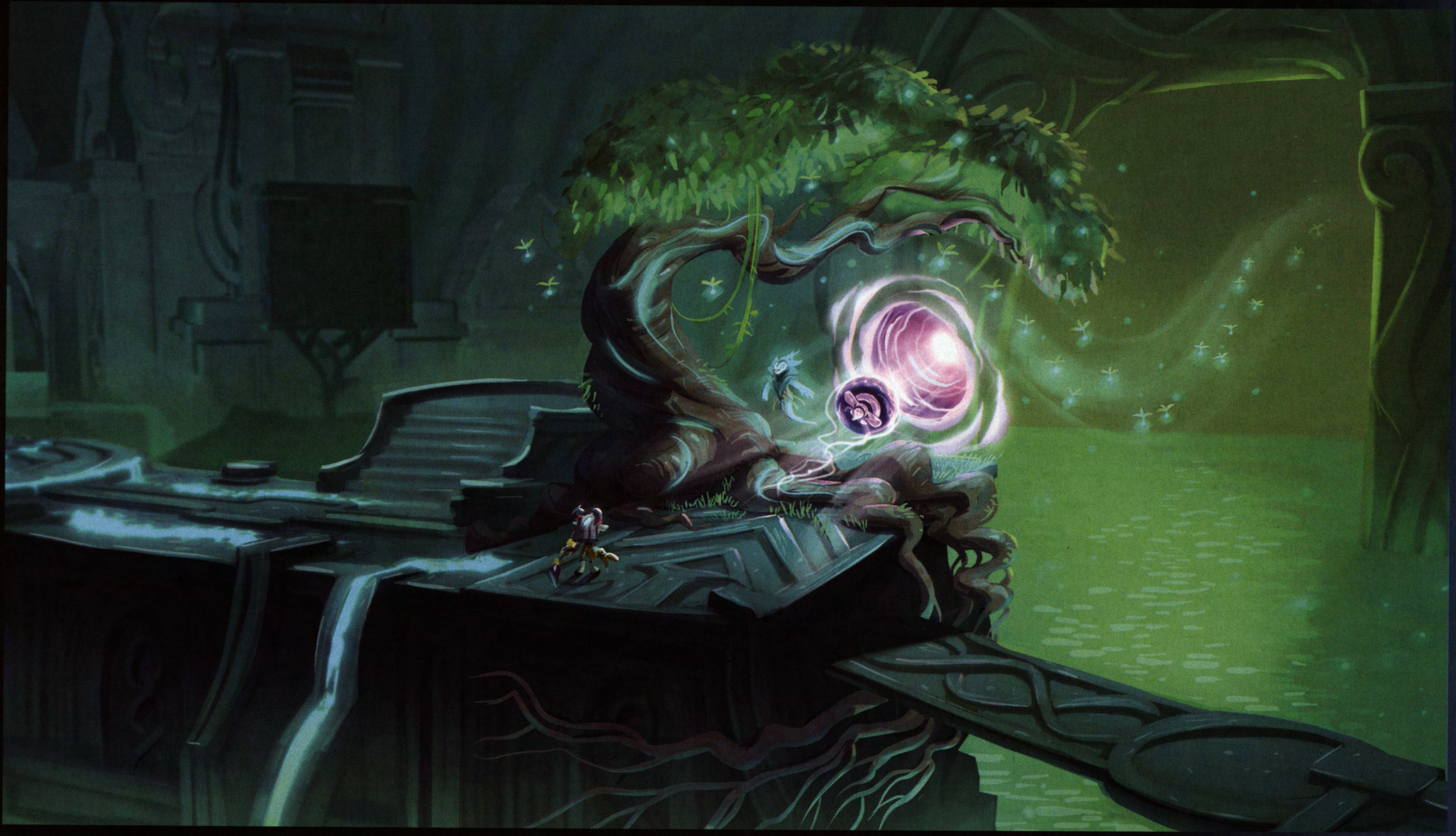




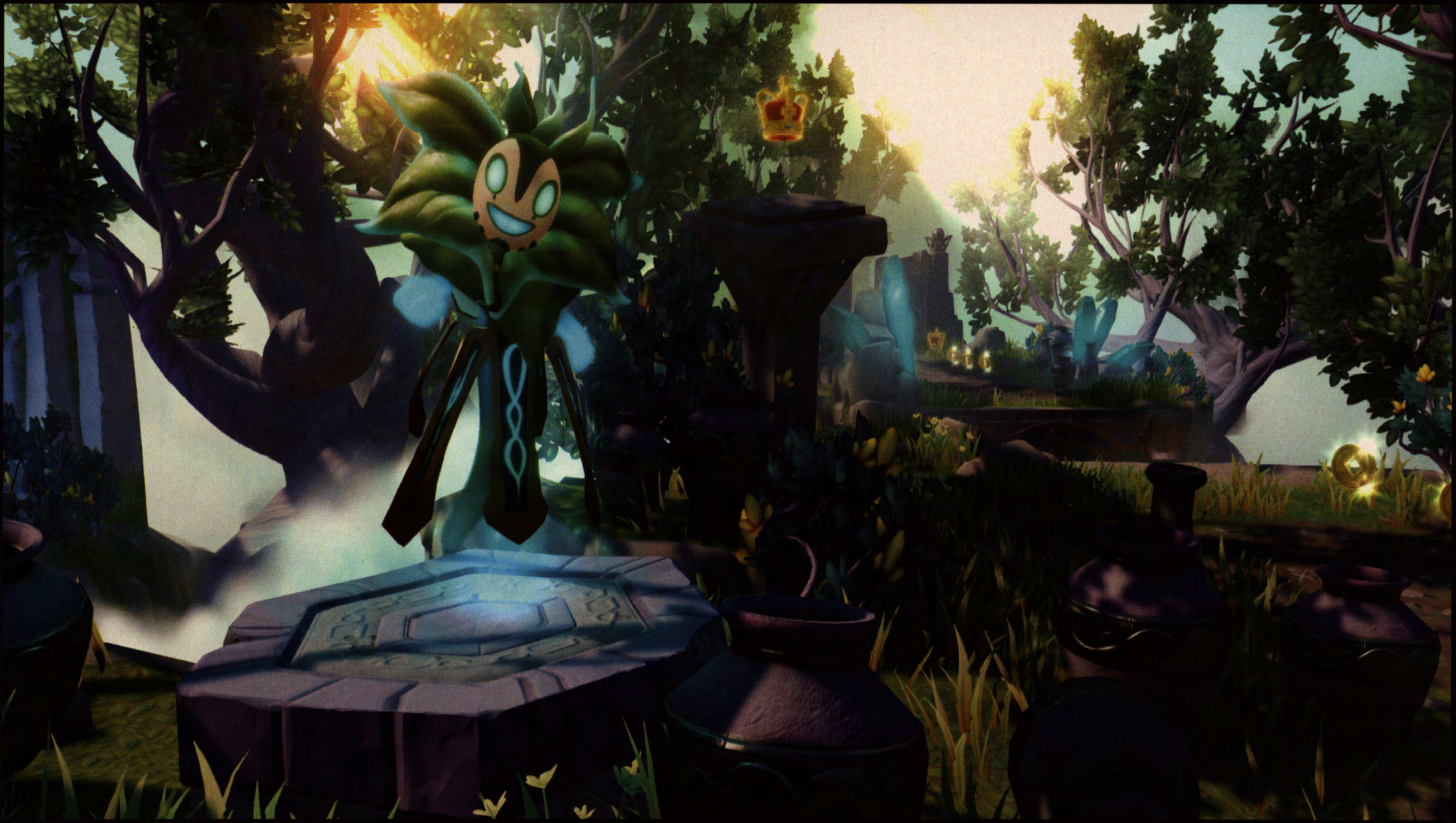






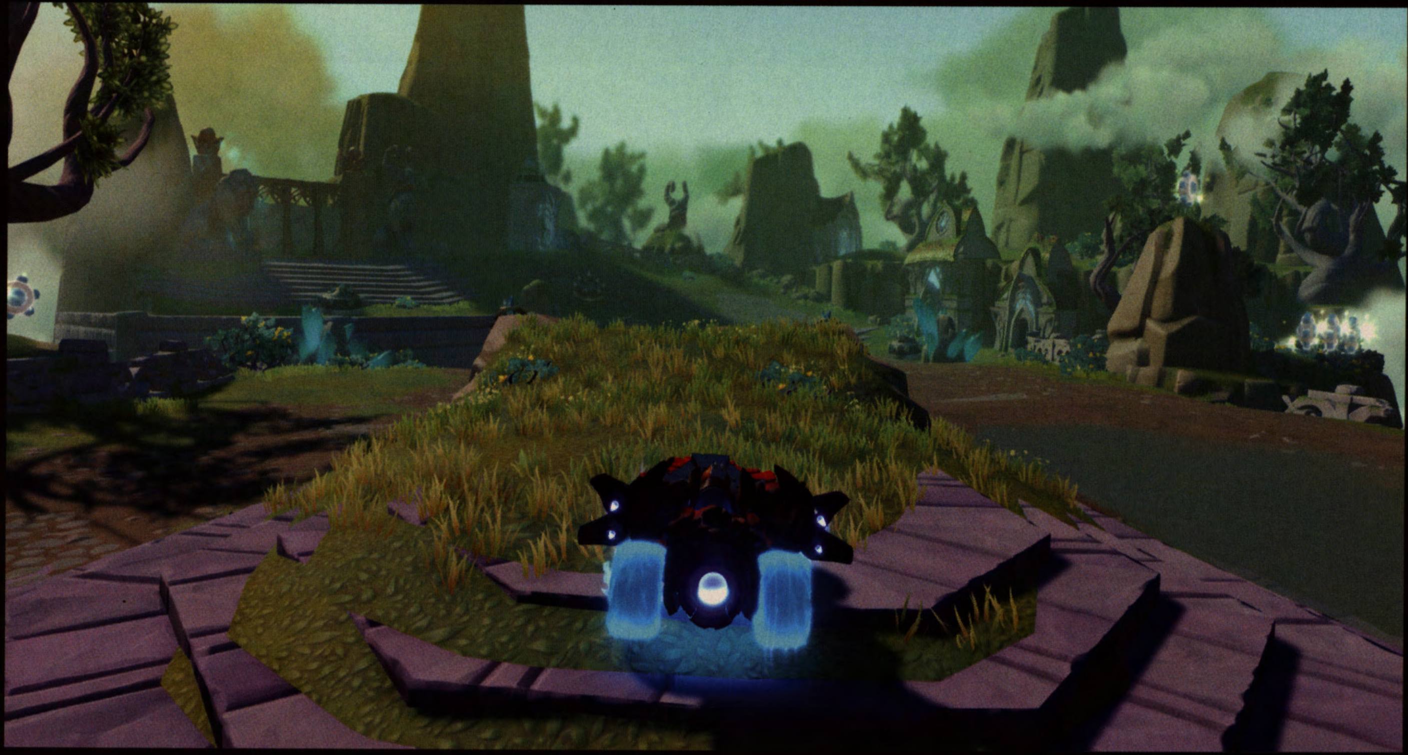


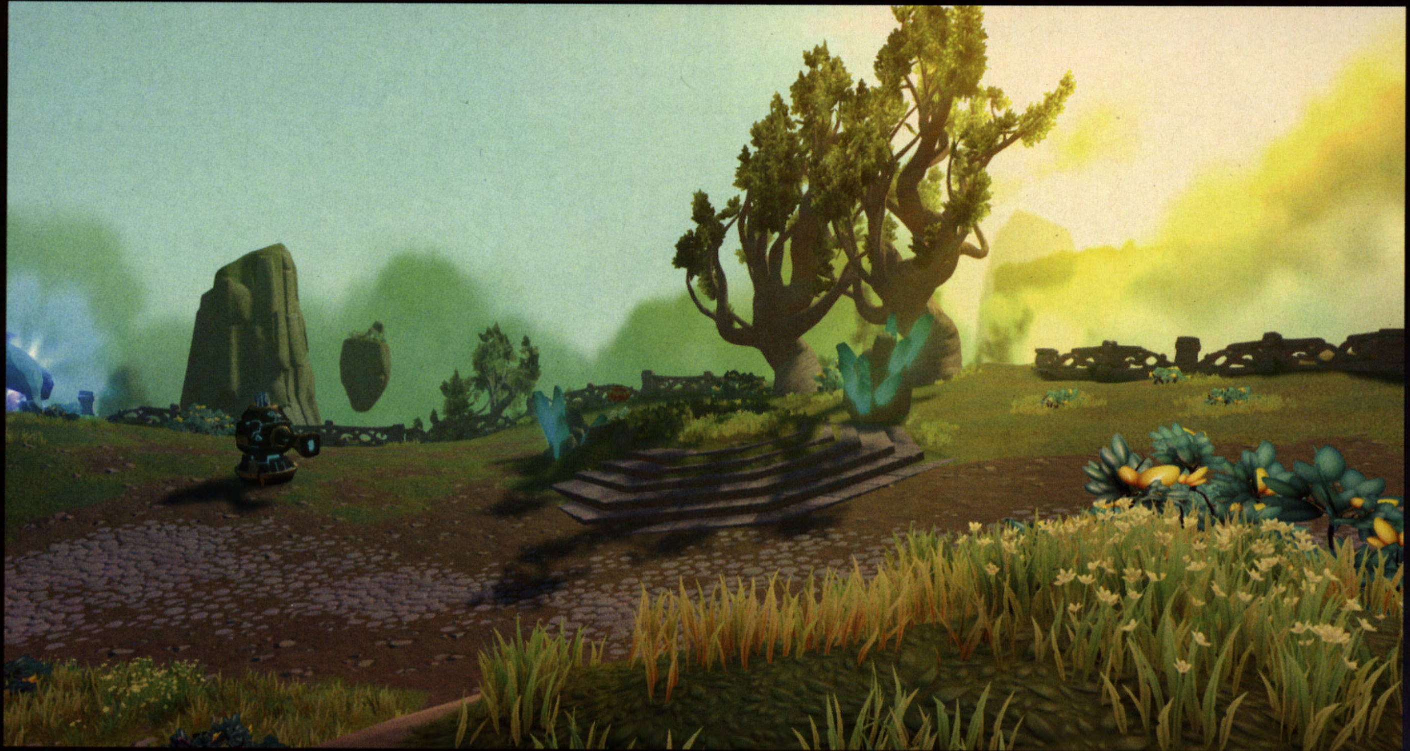
SCREENSHOTS

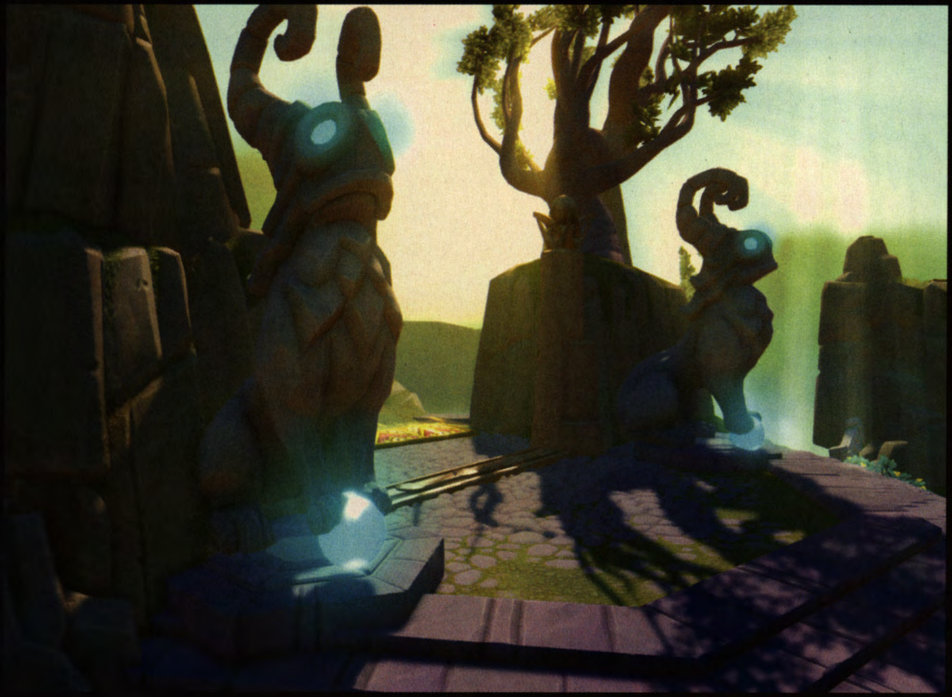


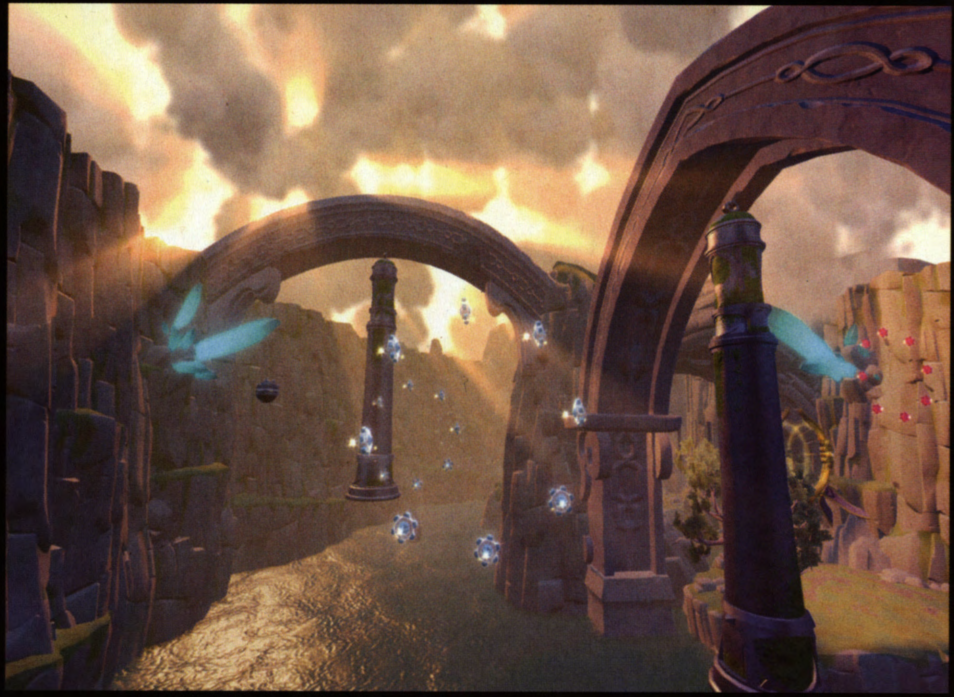
Watching the Art Department take the Vault of the Ancients level from concept to gameplay was like watching the elves build Middle Earth. I'd come into work almost every other morning and see some new awe-inspiring vista — it was pretty magical.

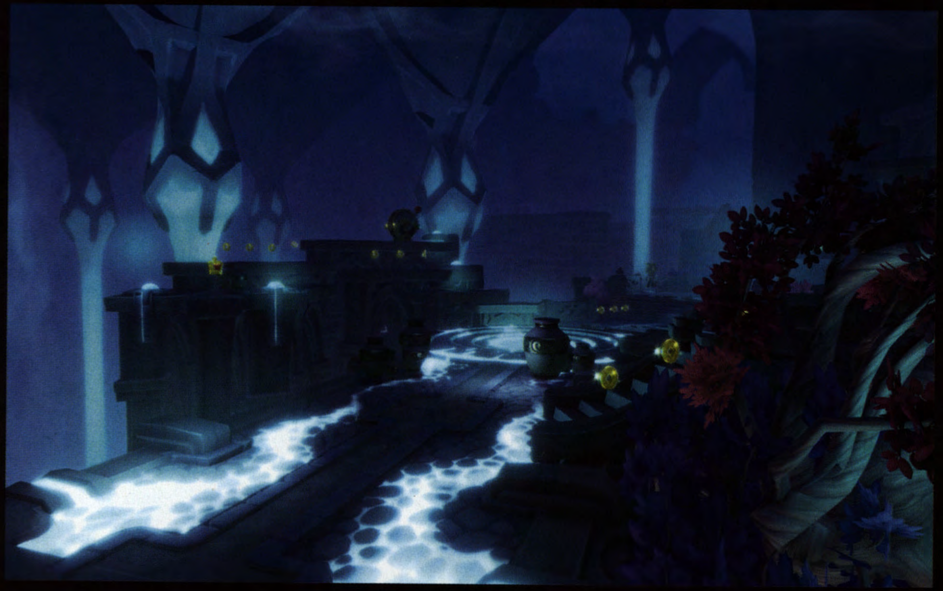
– Victoria Smith

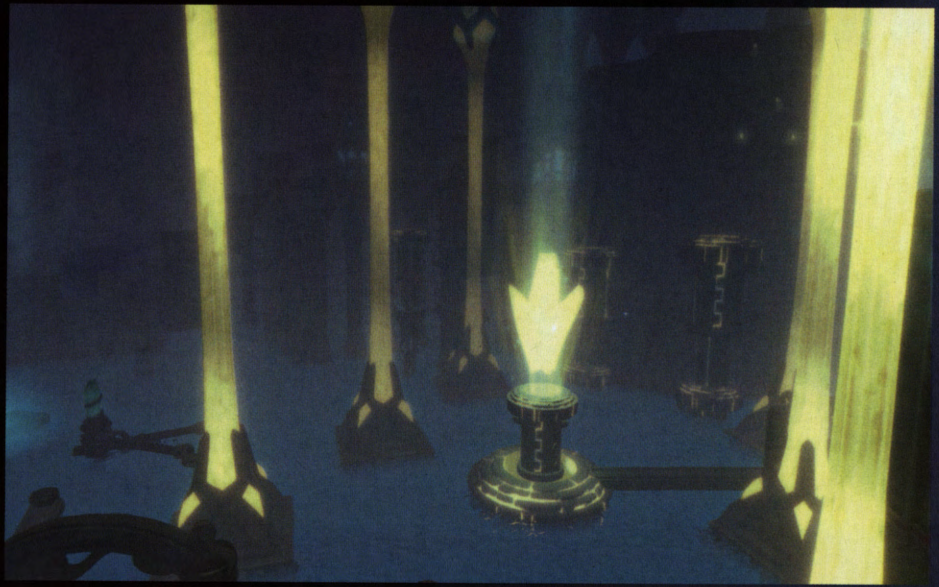




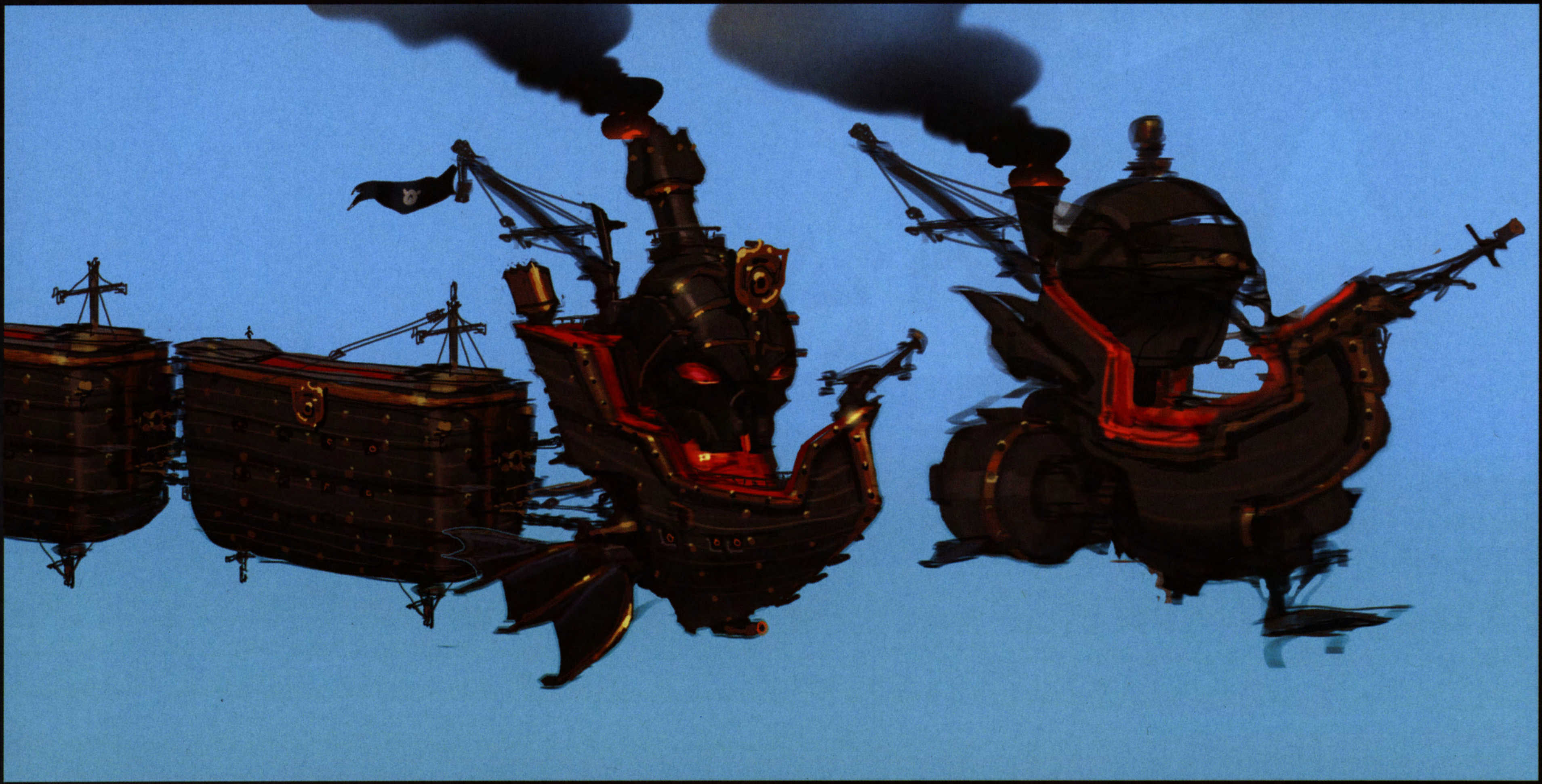






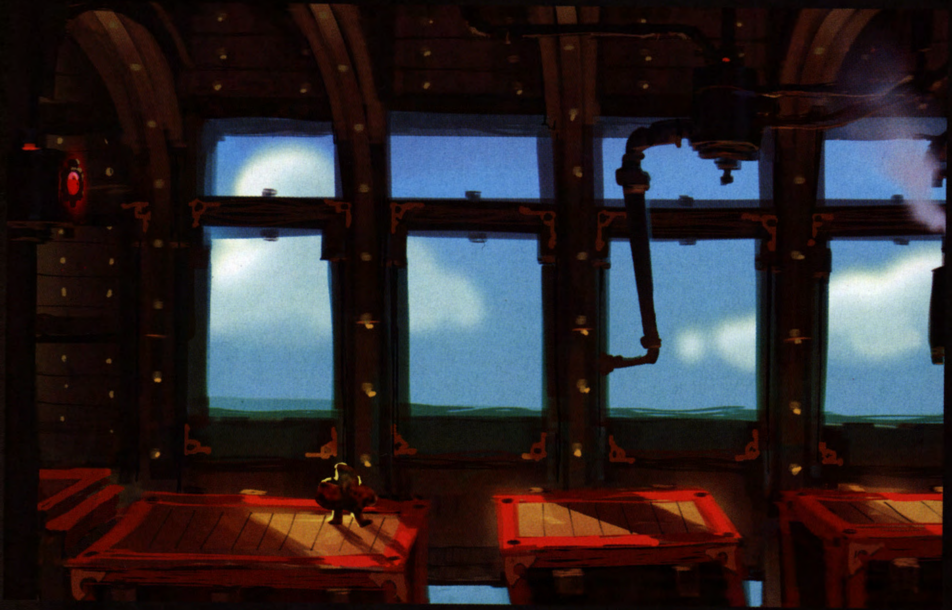


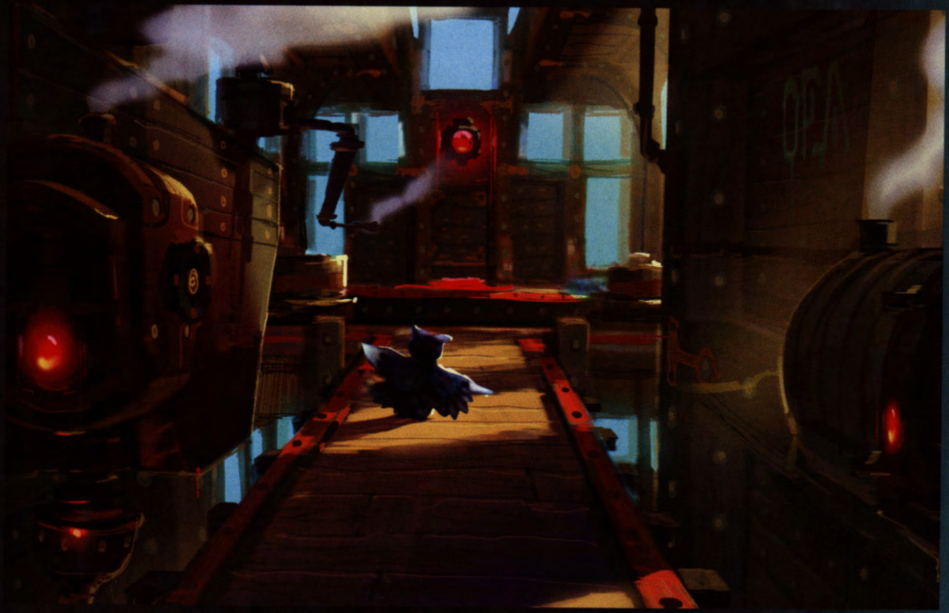
THE BANDIT TRAIN

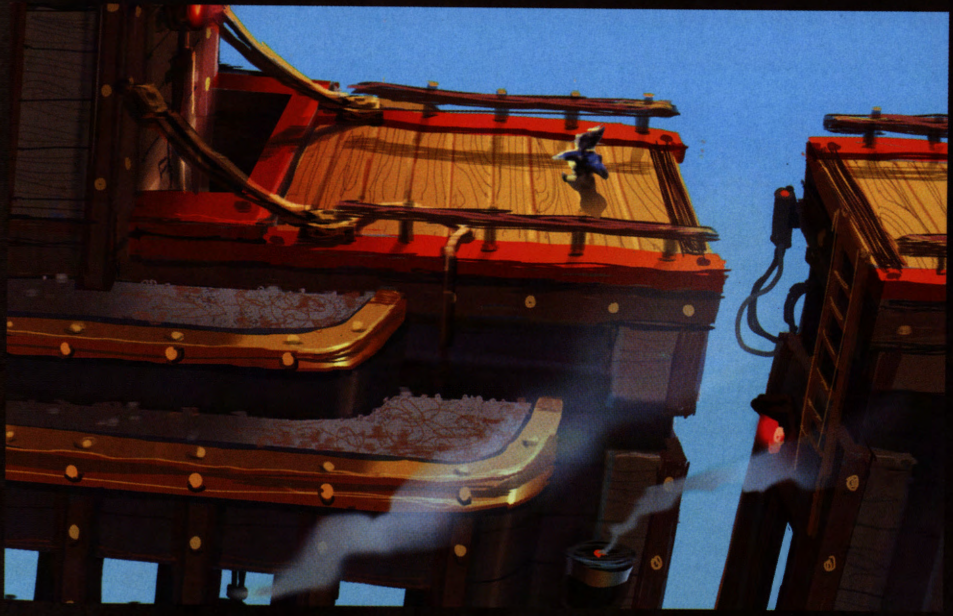


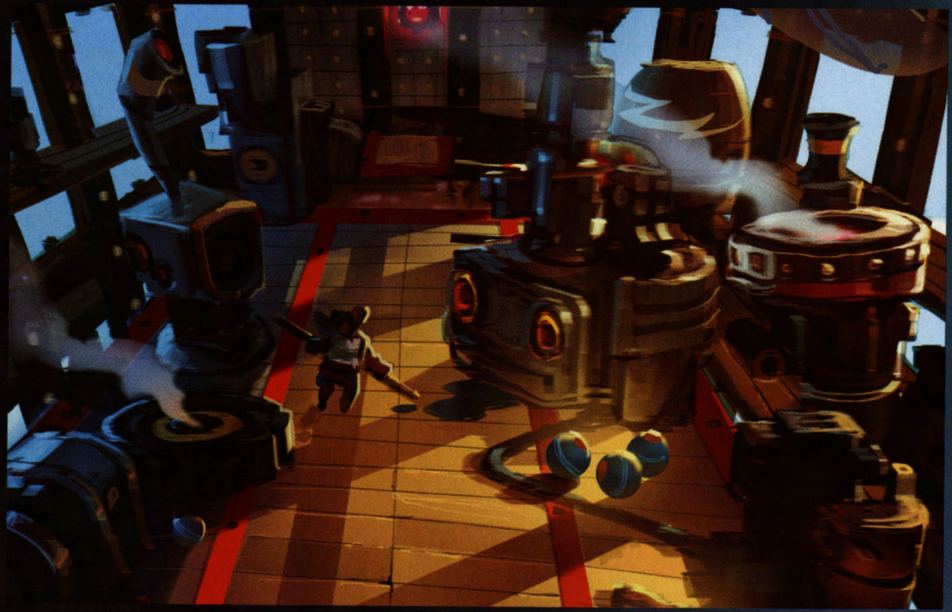
The Bandit Train was a very challenging map. It was made to be randomly rearranged for side quests. There are a lot of systems woven together to make sure different story and mechanical elements fire only when we want them to.

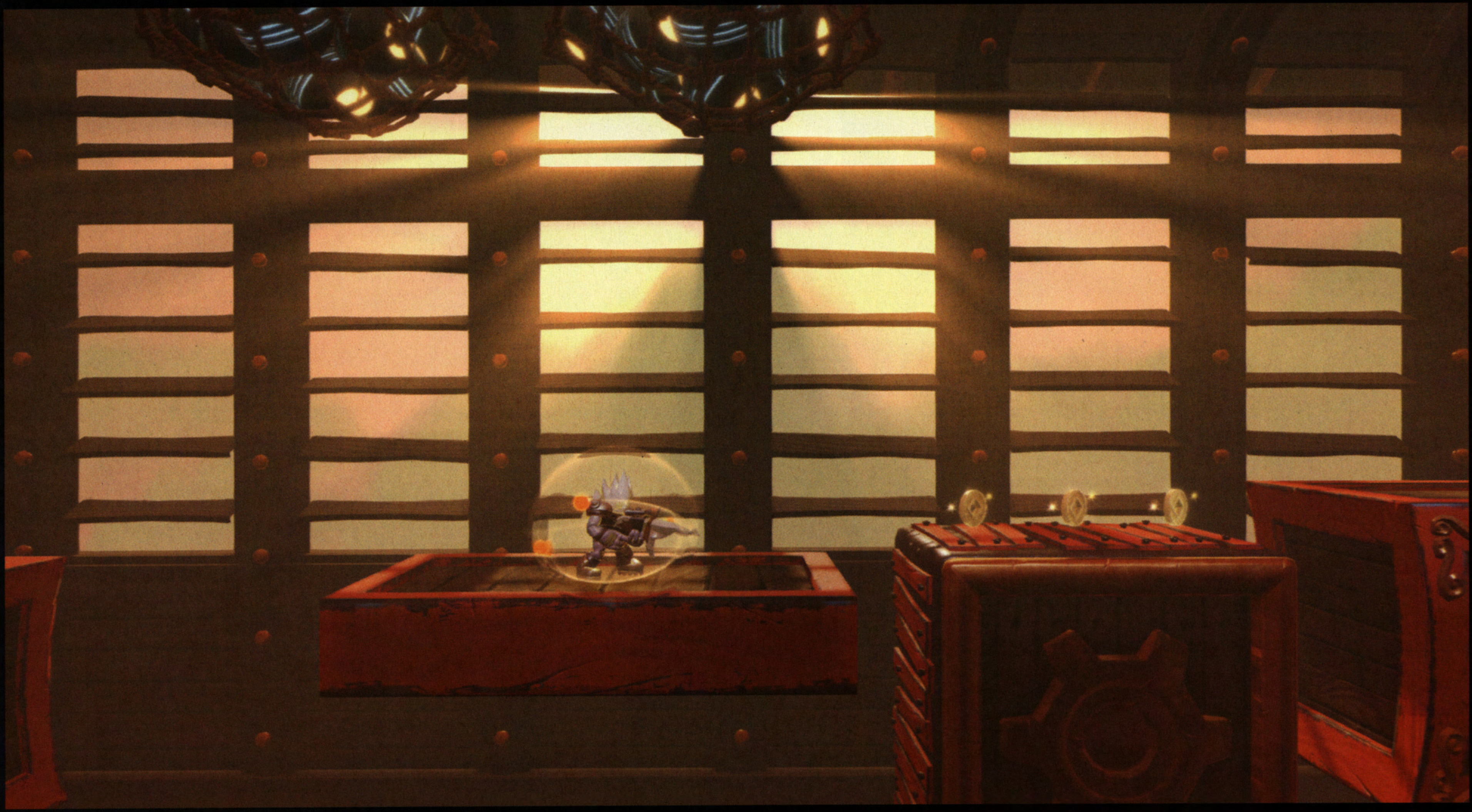
– Jared Merback

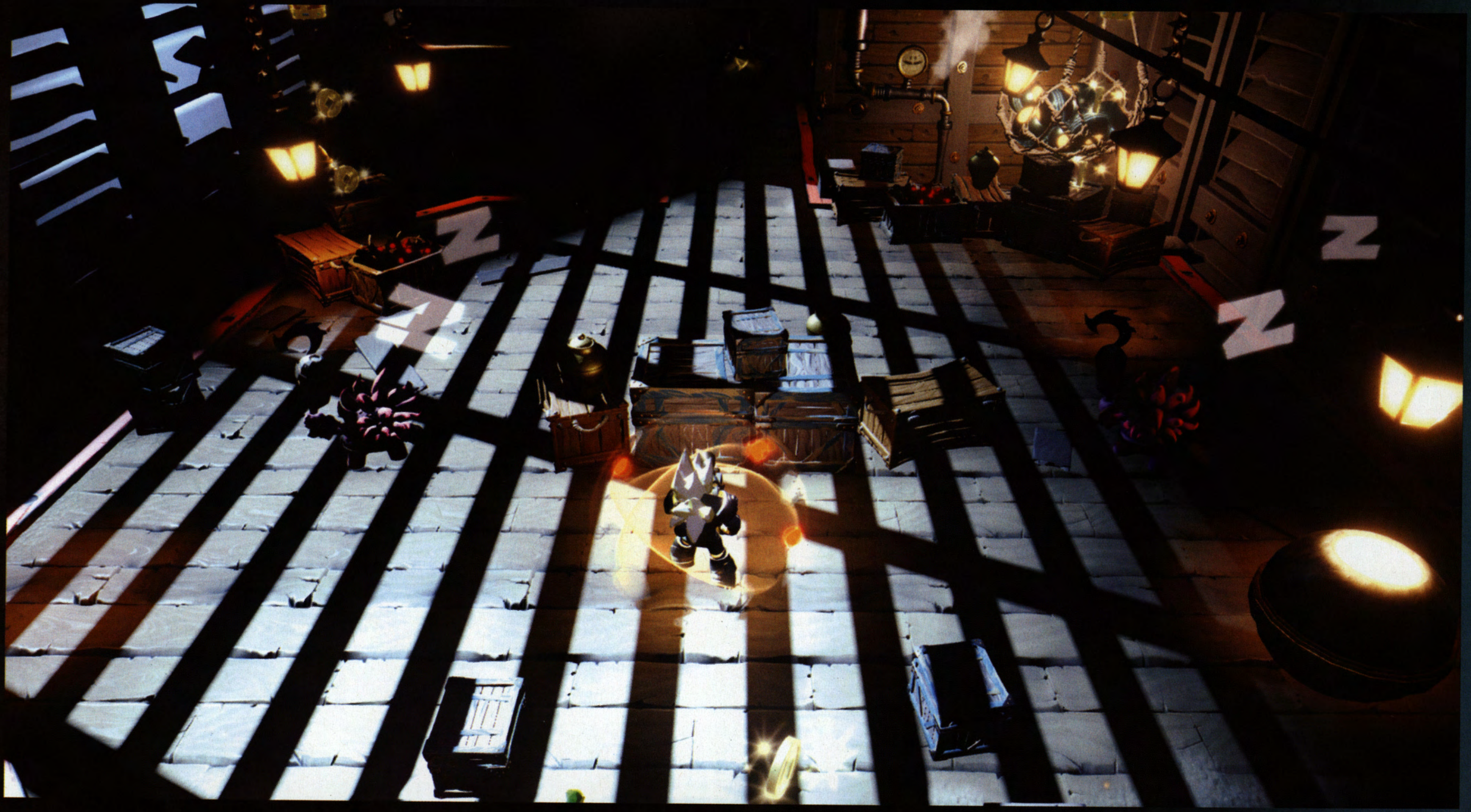








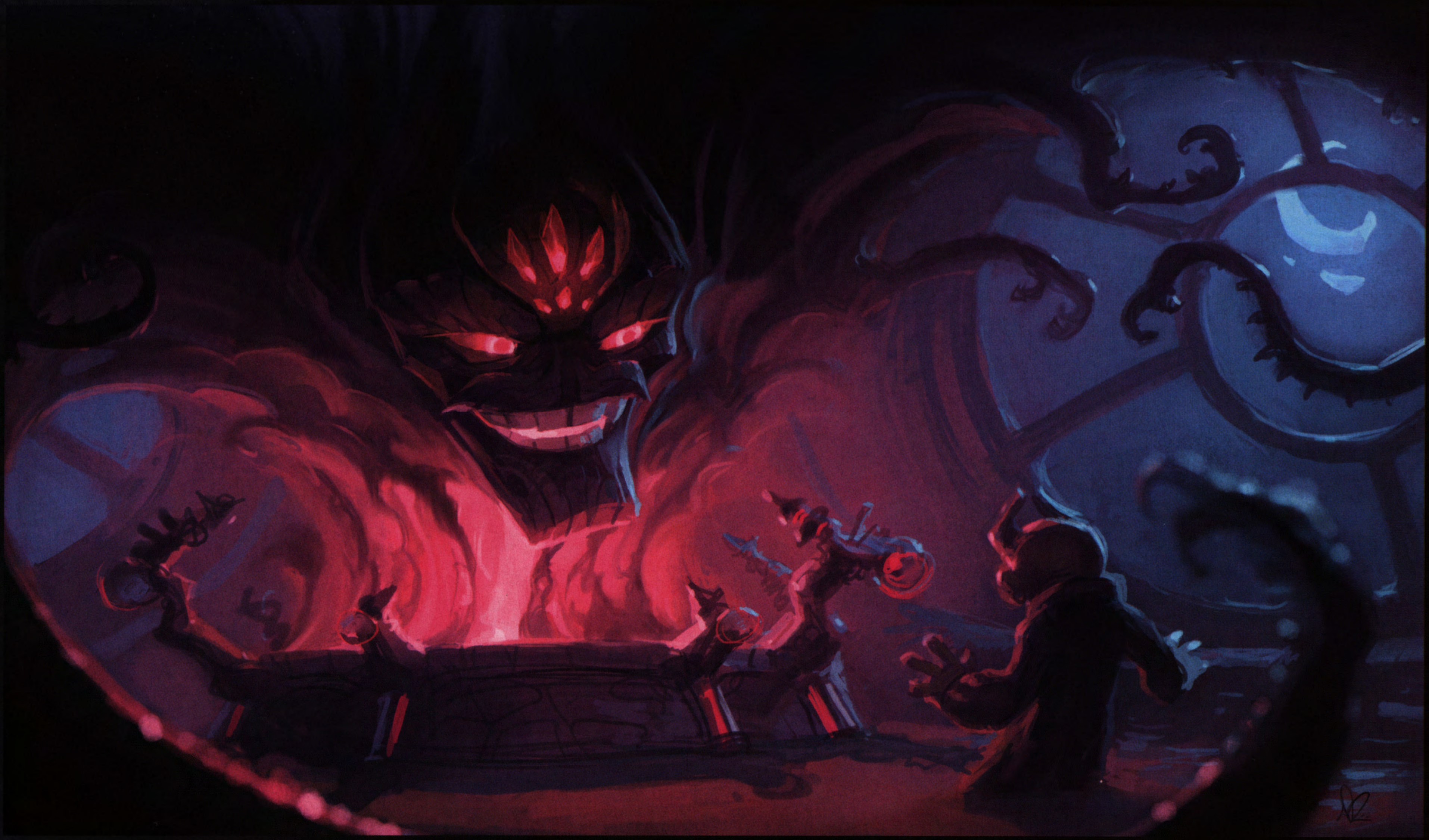




We had a hard time getting the tunnel effect to feel right in The Bandit Train. It wasn't until Carlos Cheek made the amazing lighting VFXs that it all came together.

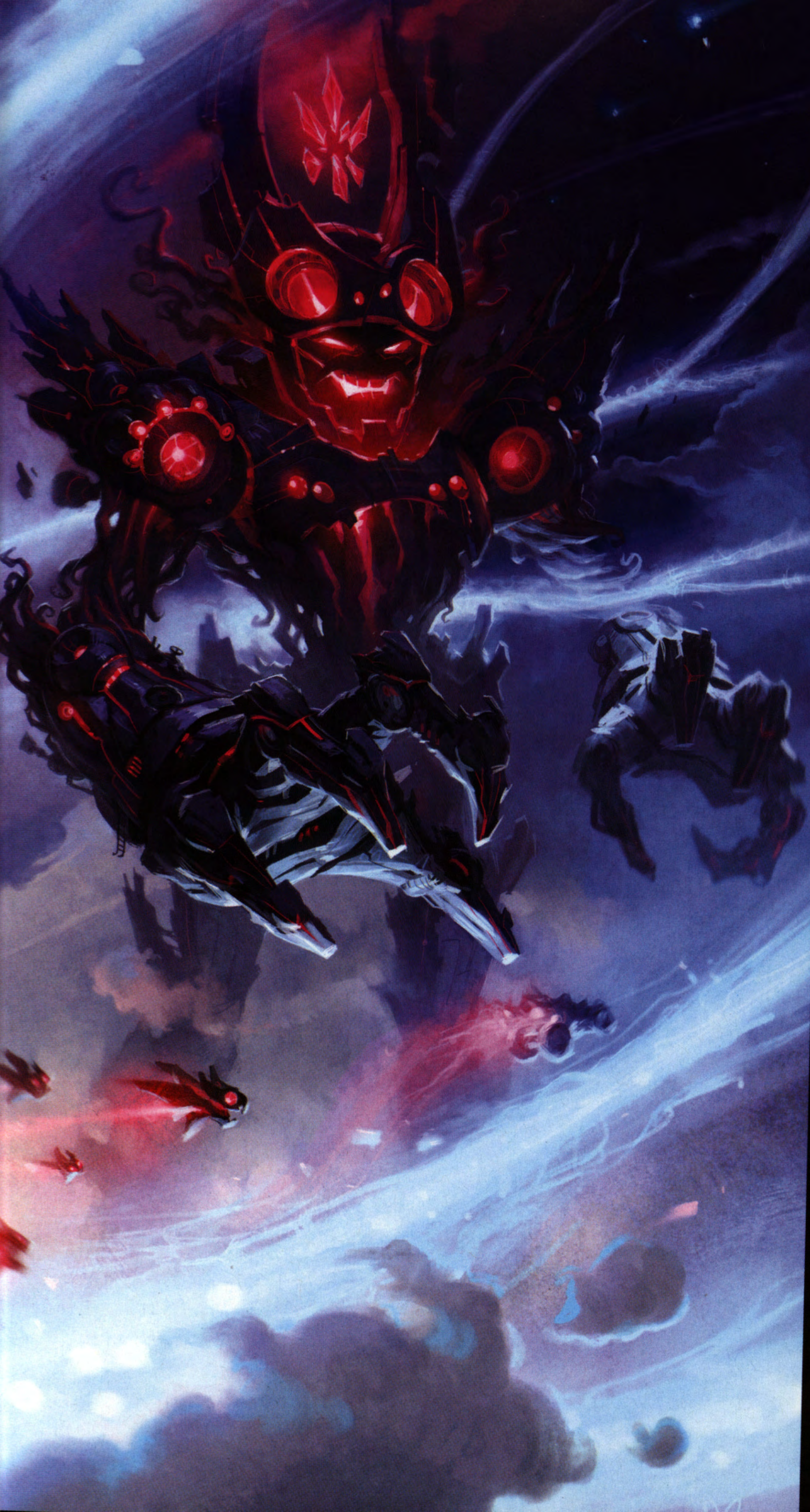
– Jared Merback

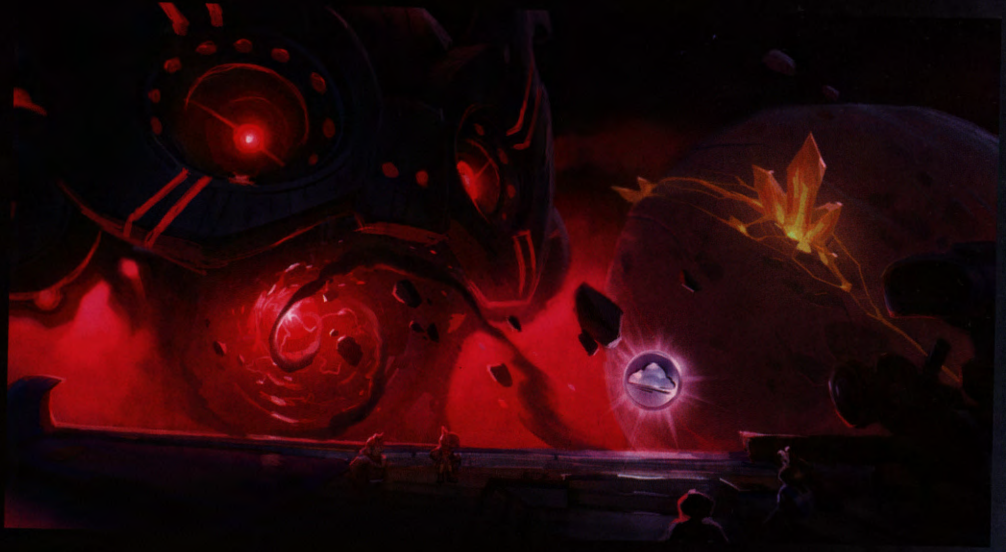
THE SKY EATER

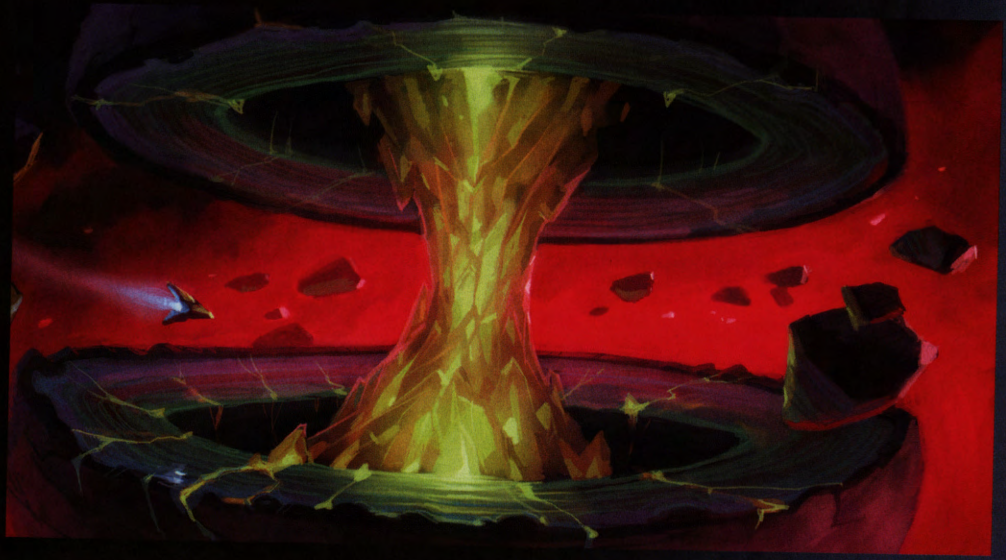


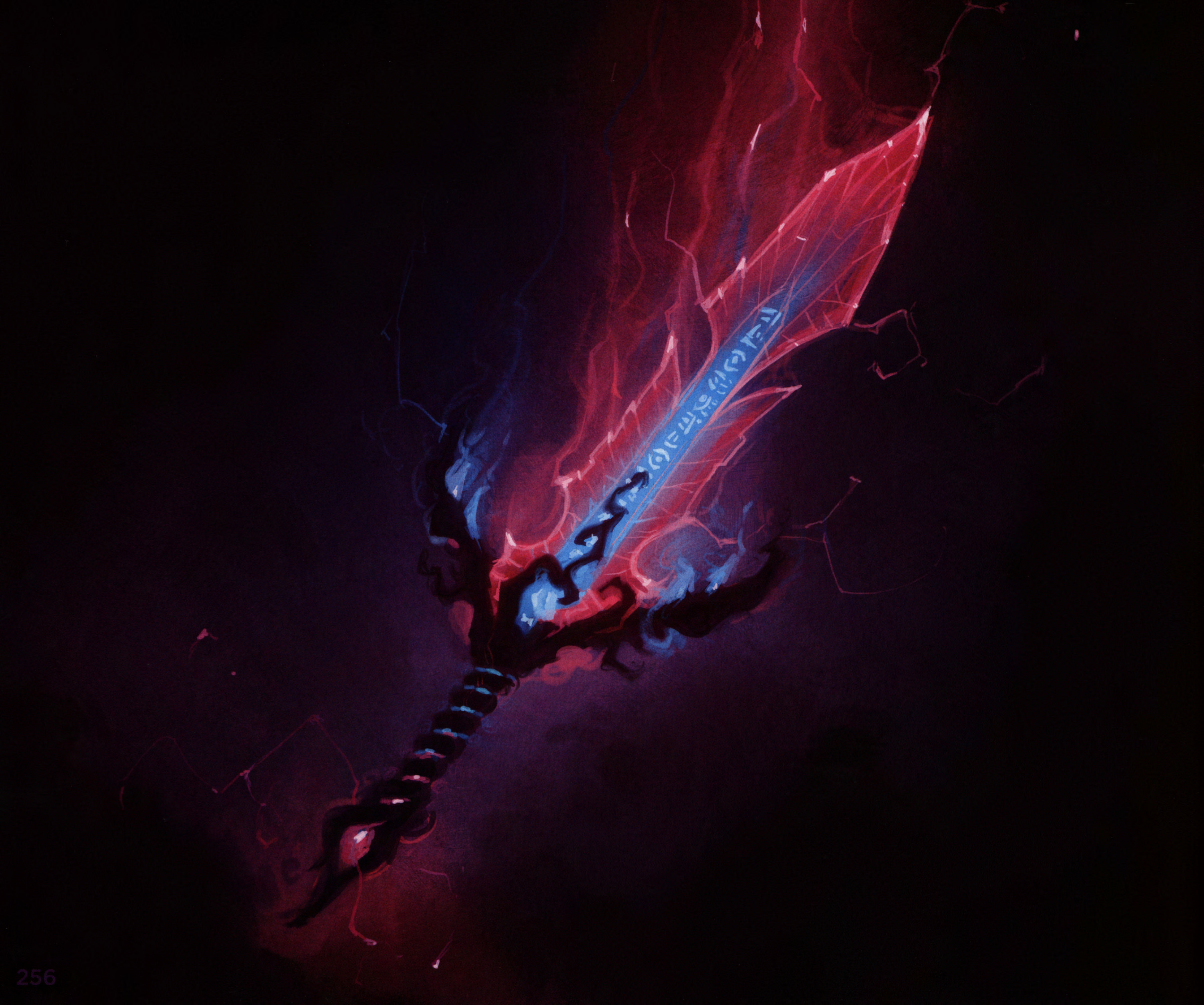
We really wanted to fly up its nose but we were told it was already taken.

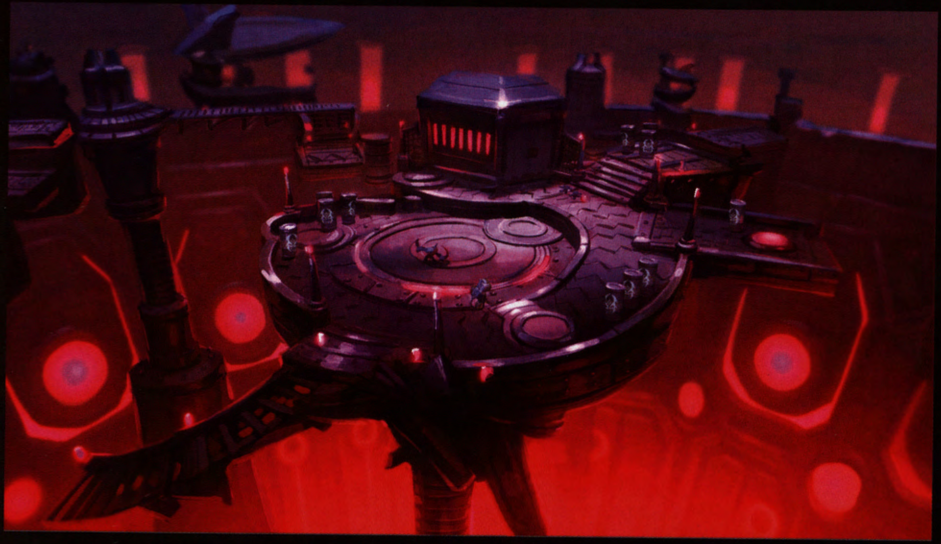
– Chris Degnan

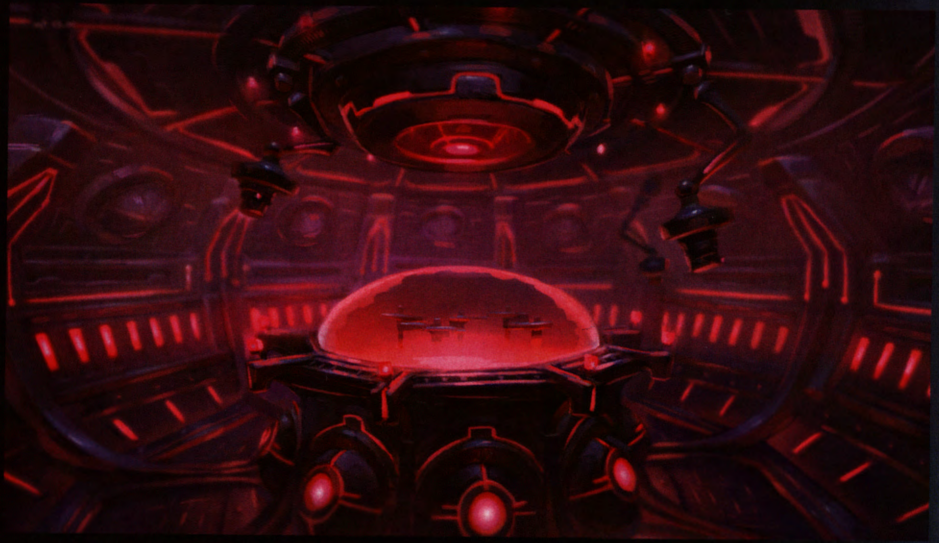


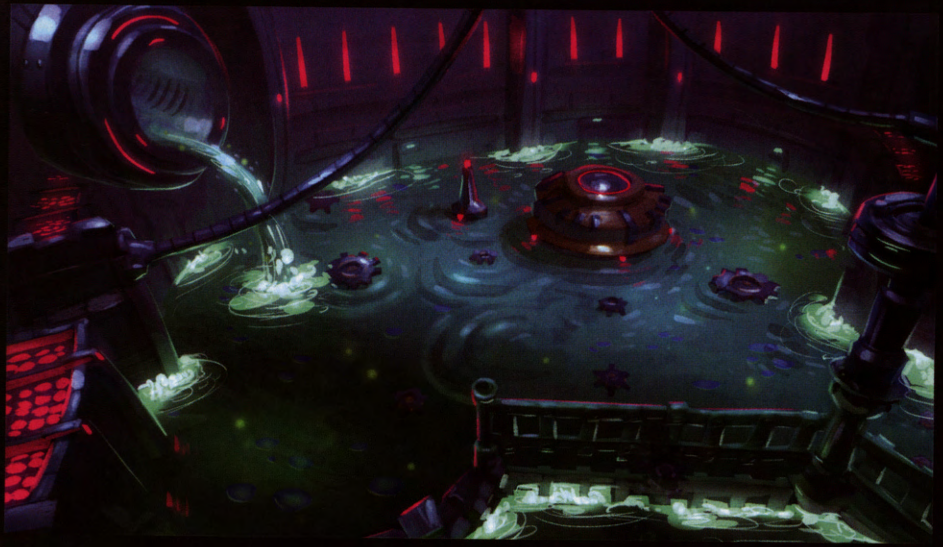


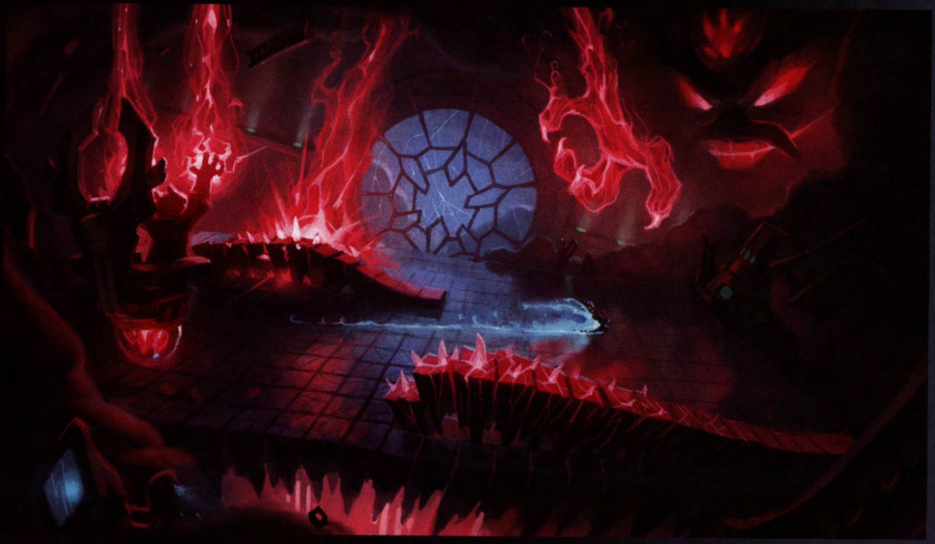


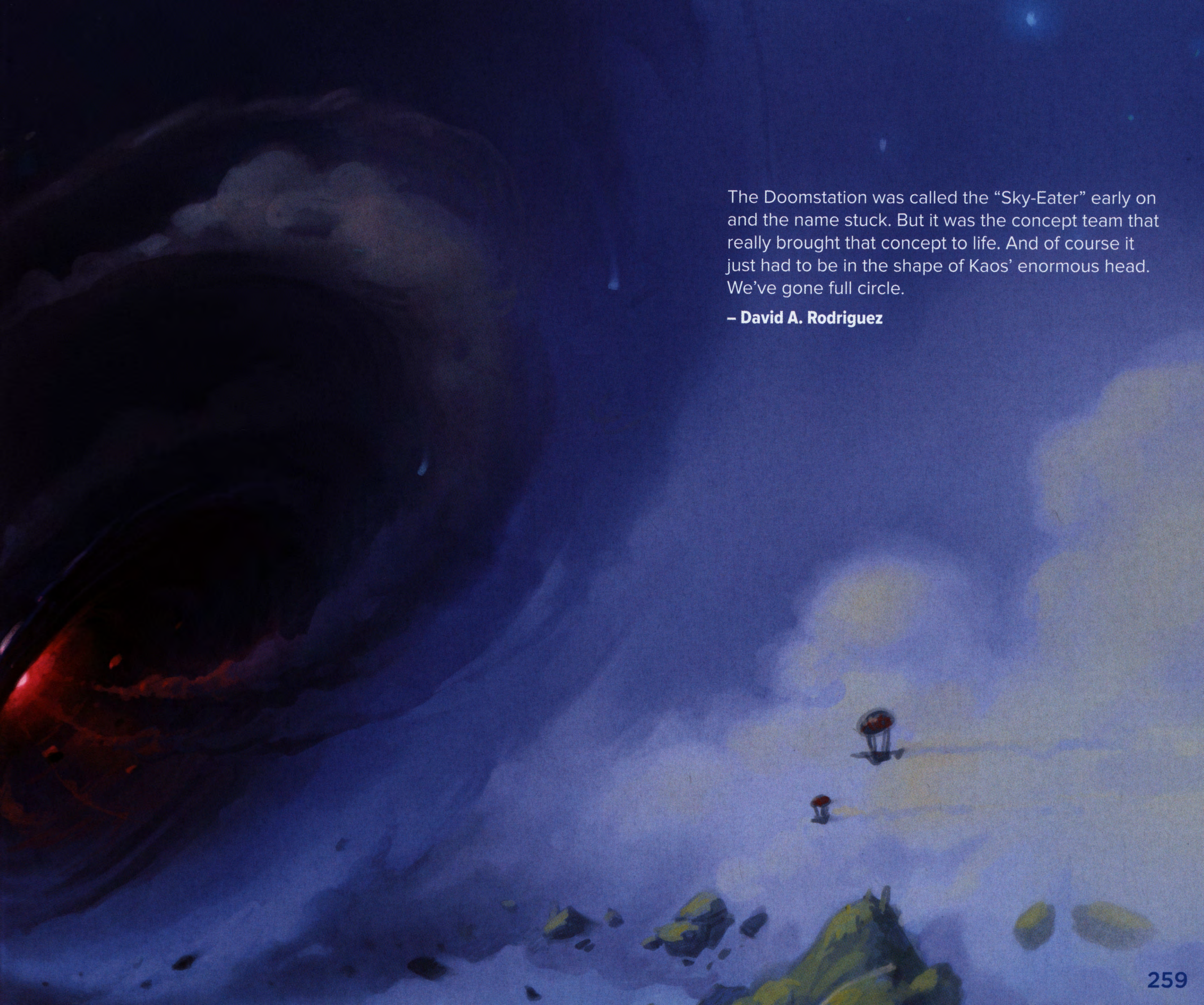






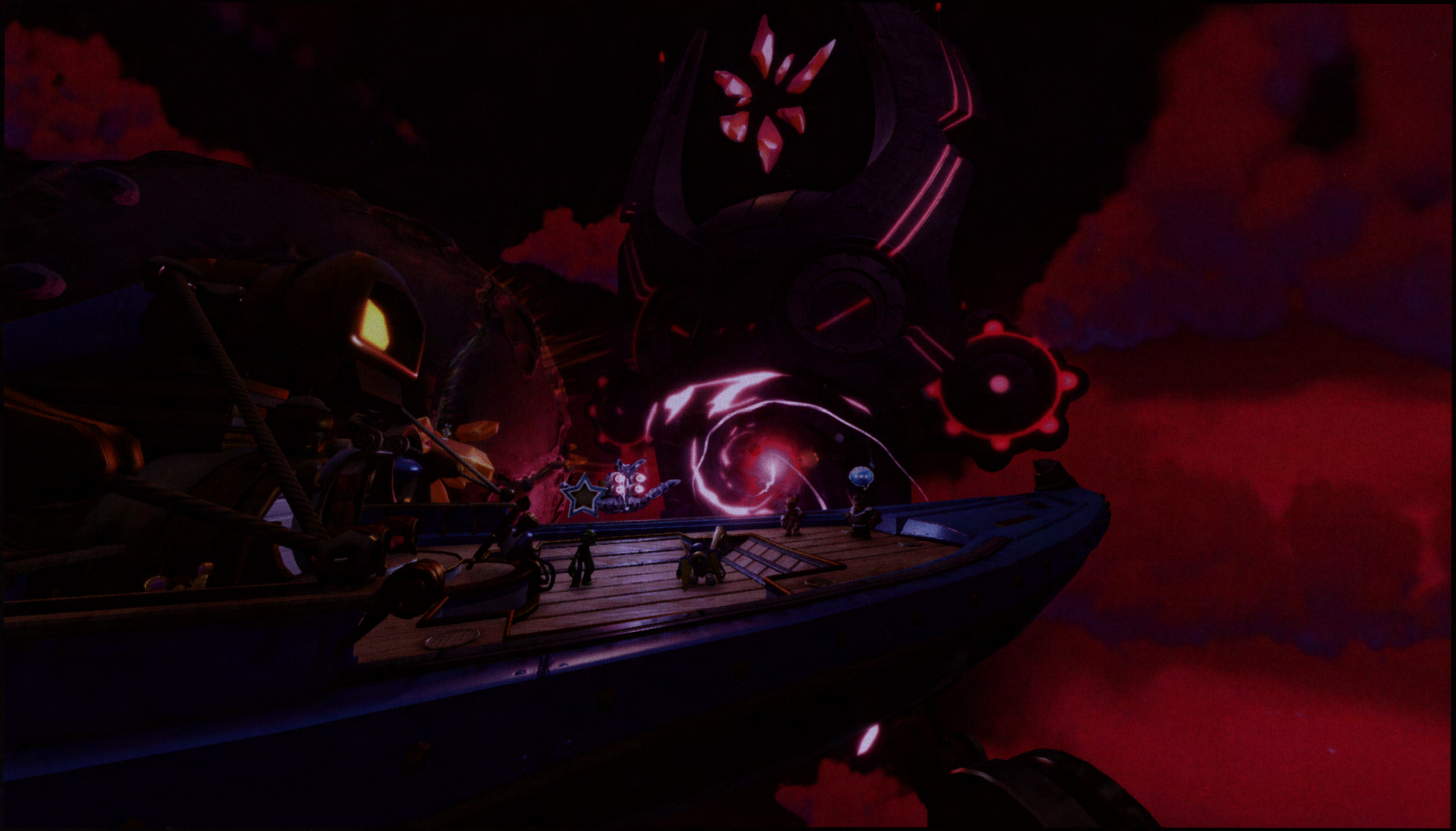


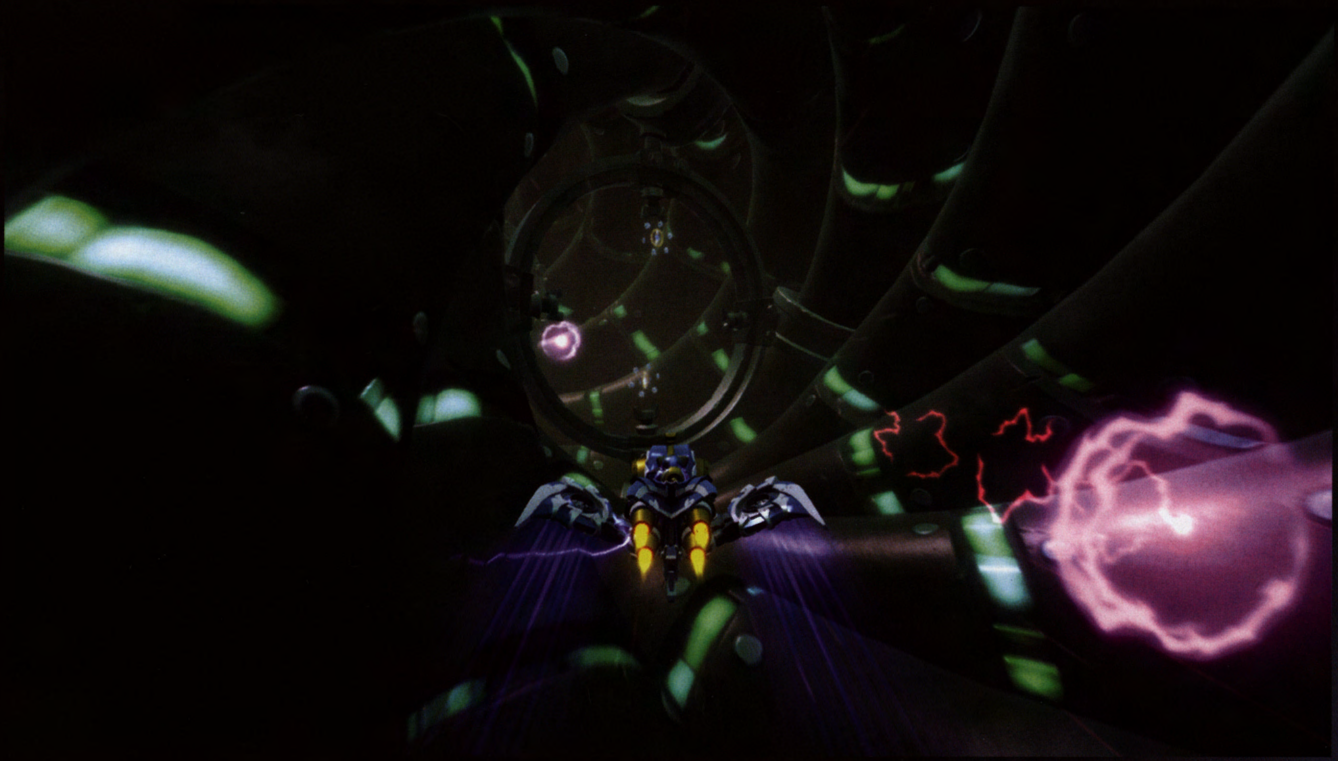




The Doomstation was called the “Sky-Eater” early on and the name stuck. But it was the concept team that really brought that concept to life. And of course it just had to be in the shape of Kaos’ enormous head. We’ve gone full circle.

– David A. Rodriguez

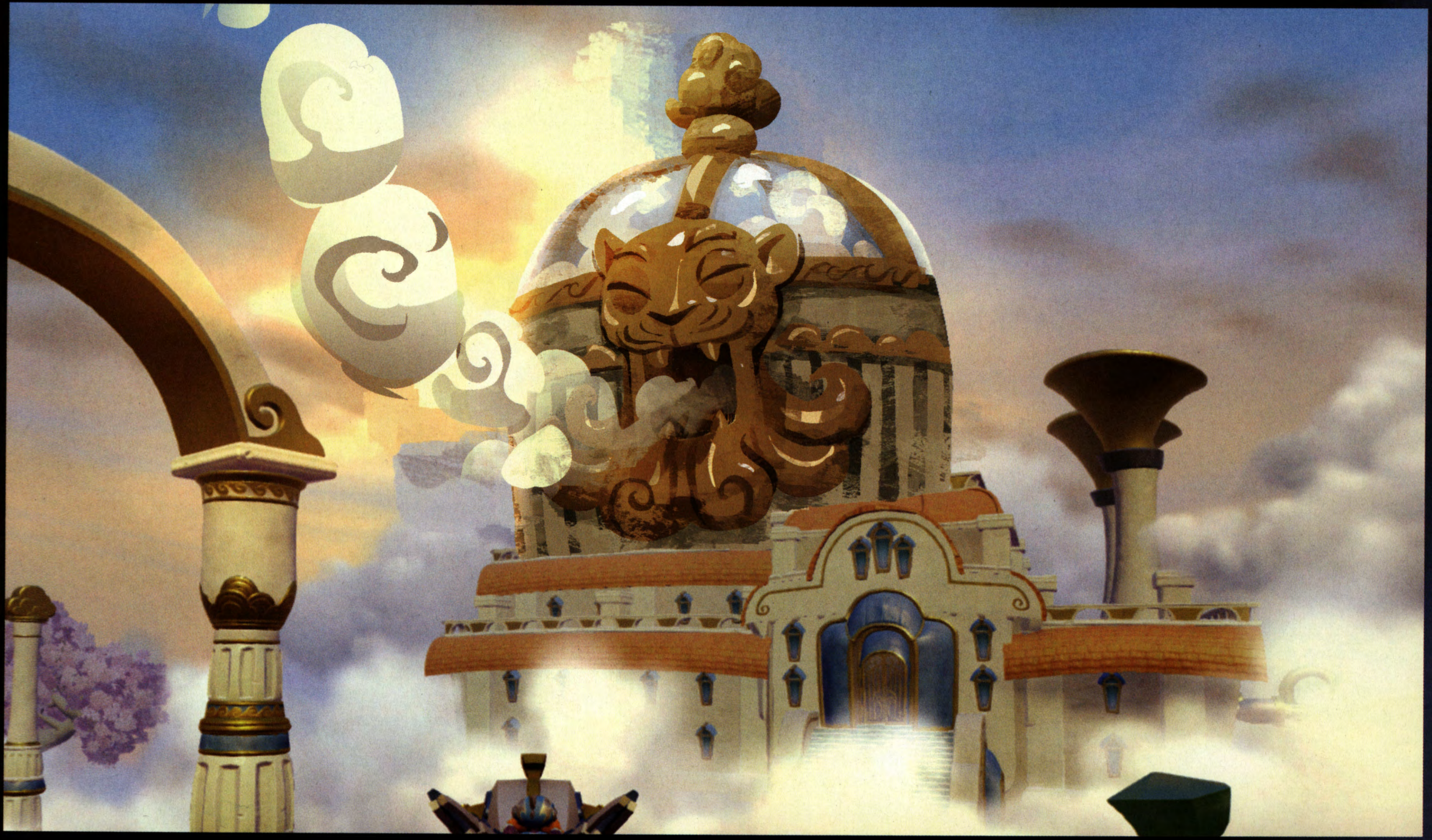


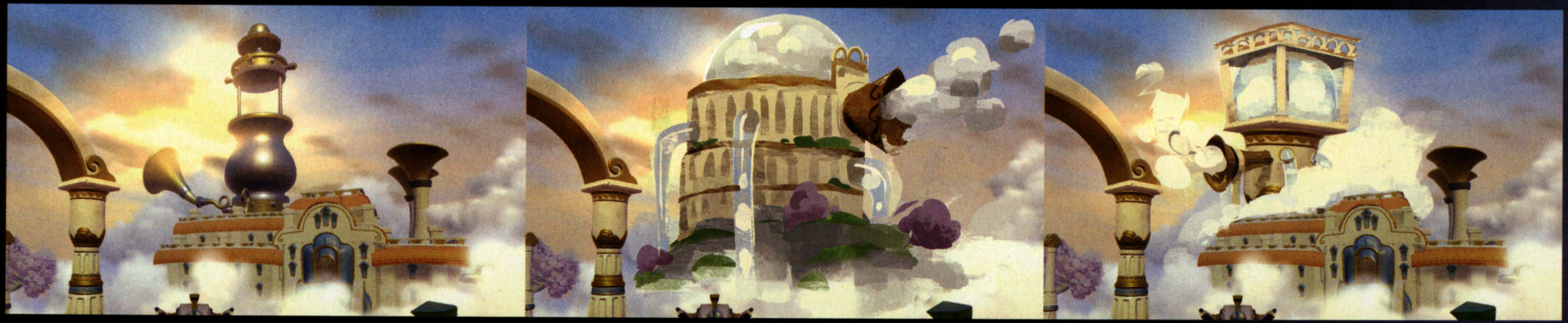


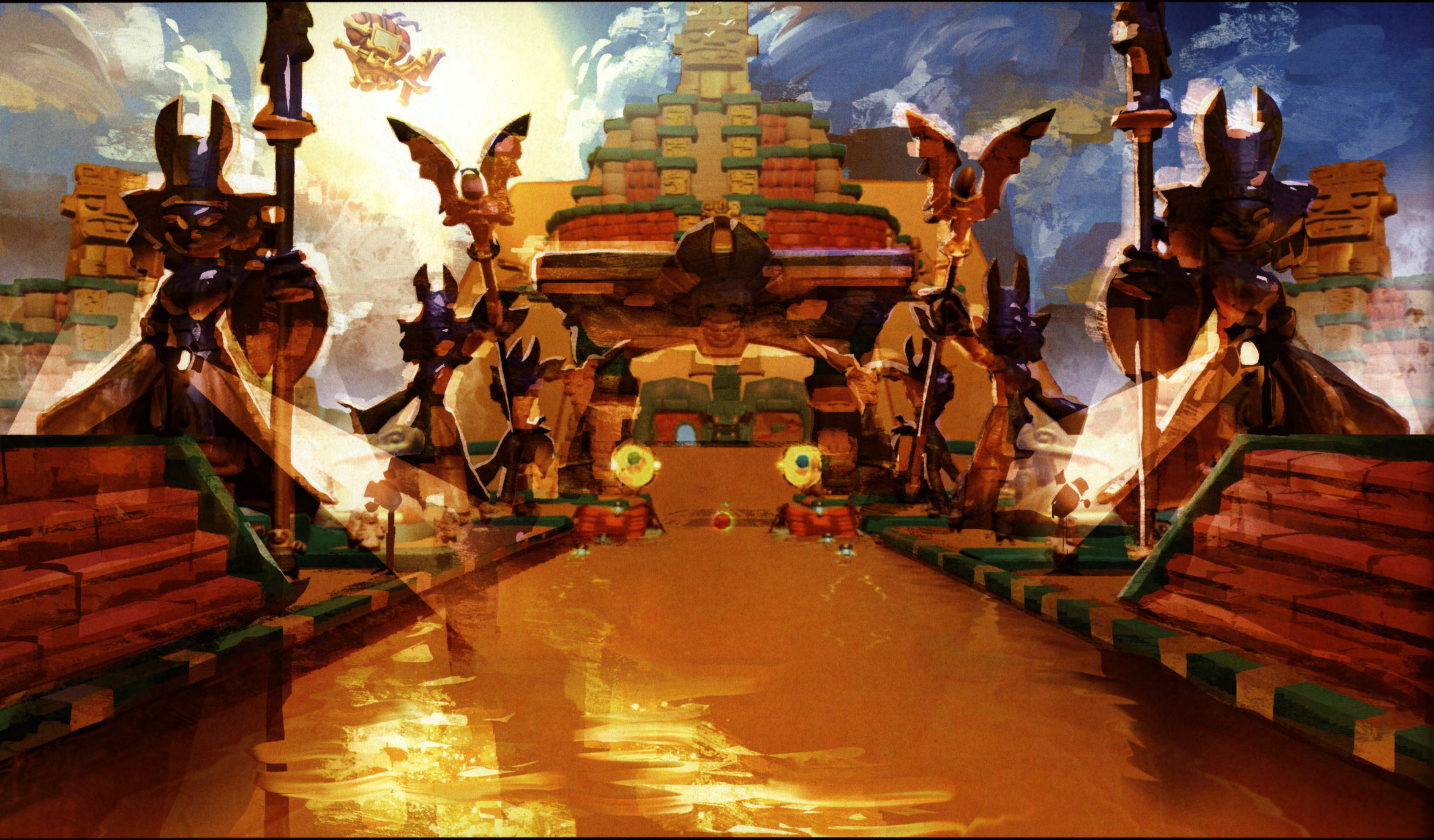
RACING

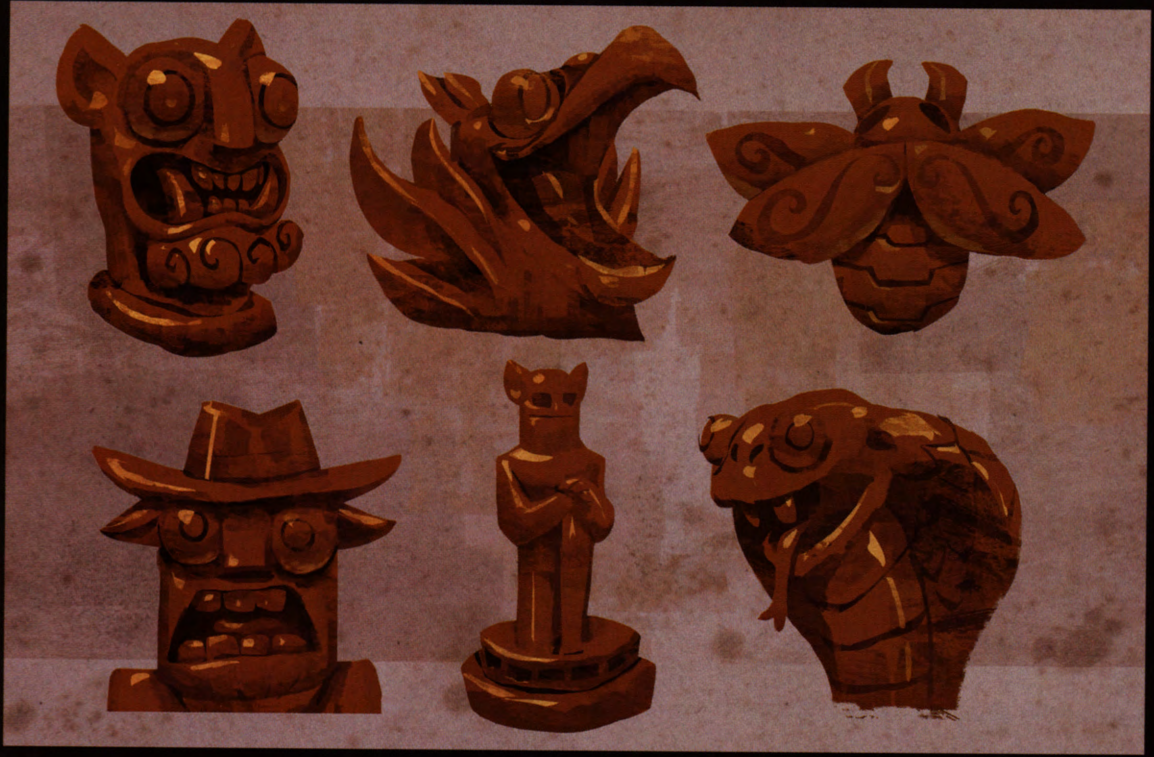
It was important that the racing part of SuperChargers be integrated directly into the story flow of the game, while also being able to stand on its own. Partnering with Beenox made that possible.

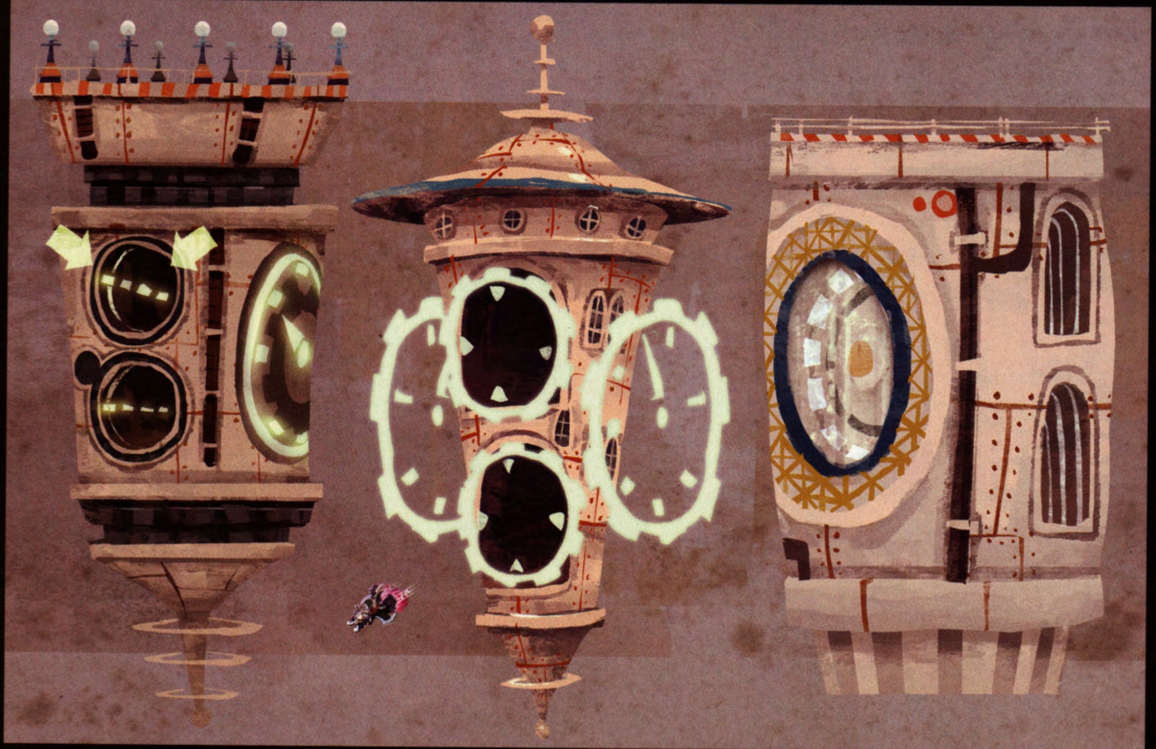
– Devin Knudsen

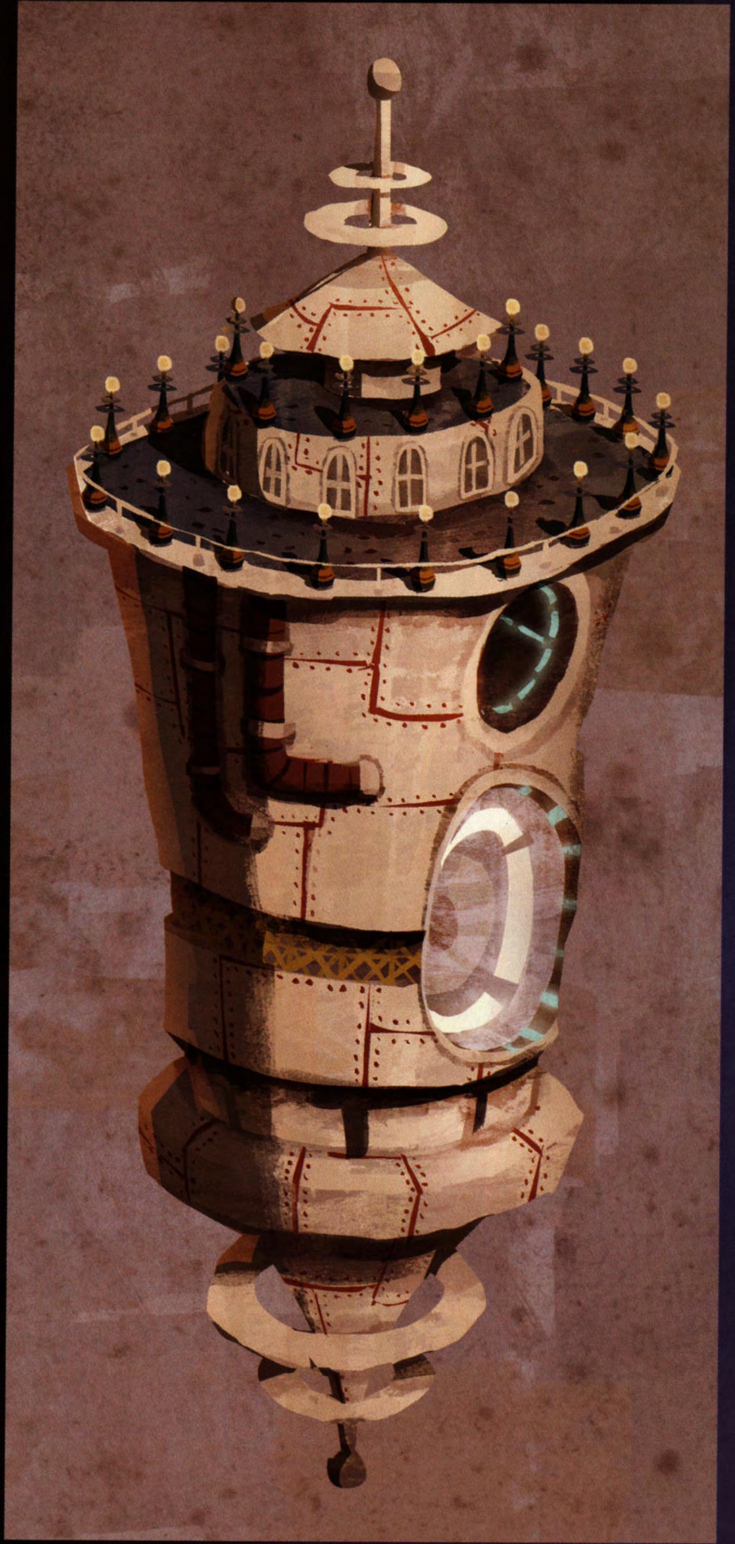


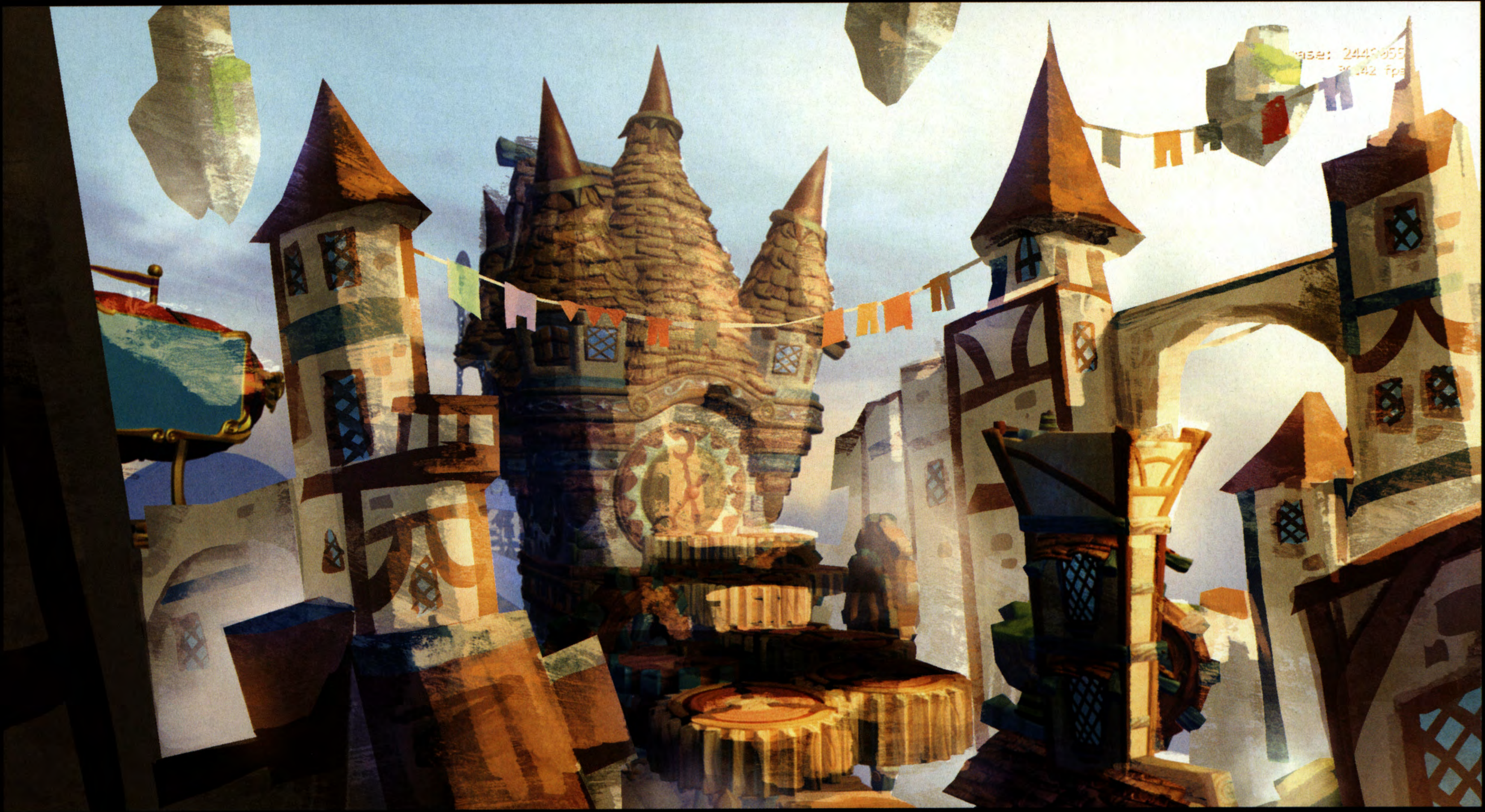


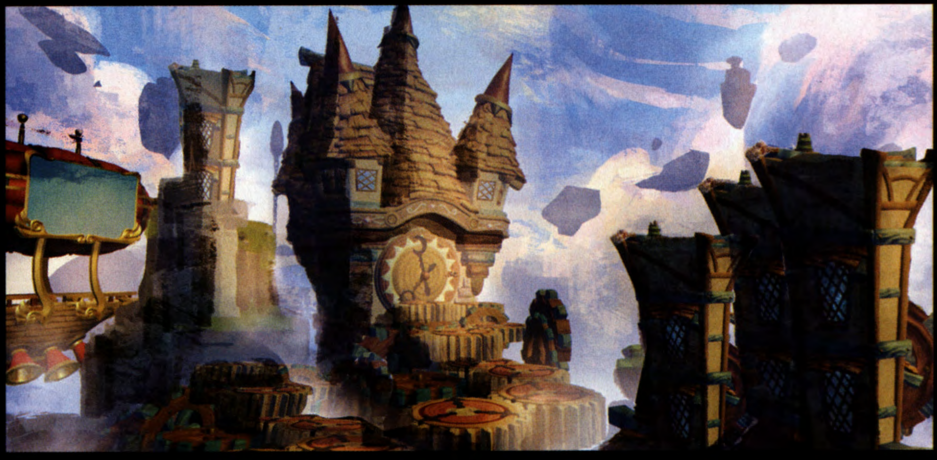


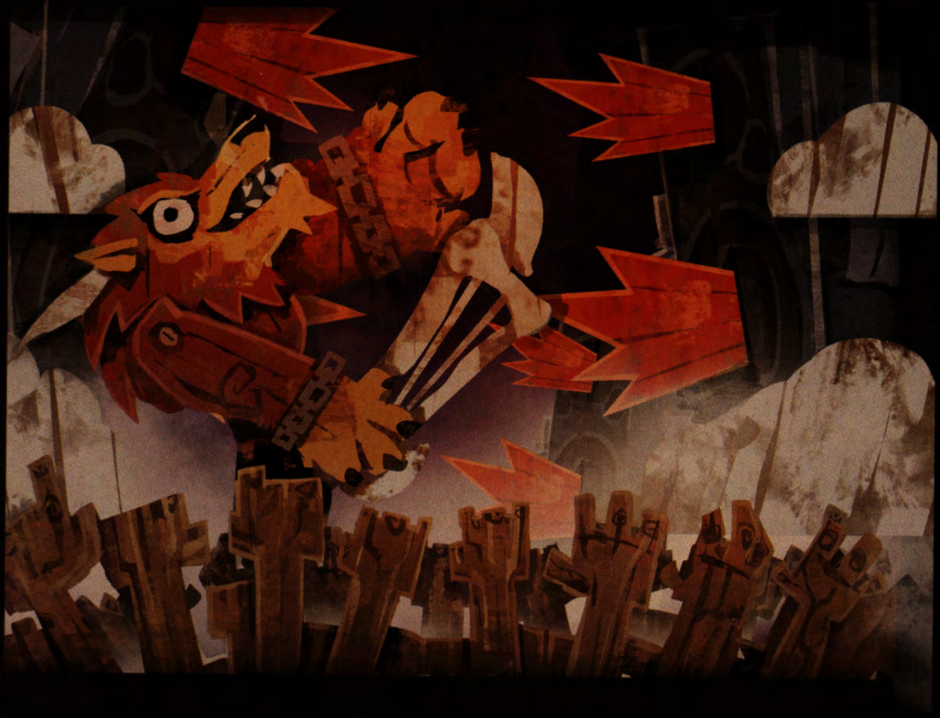


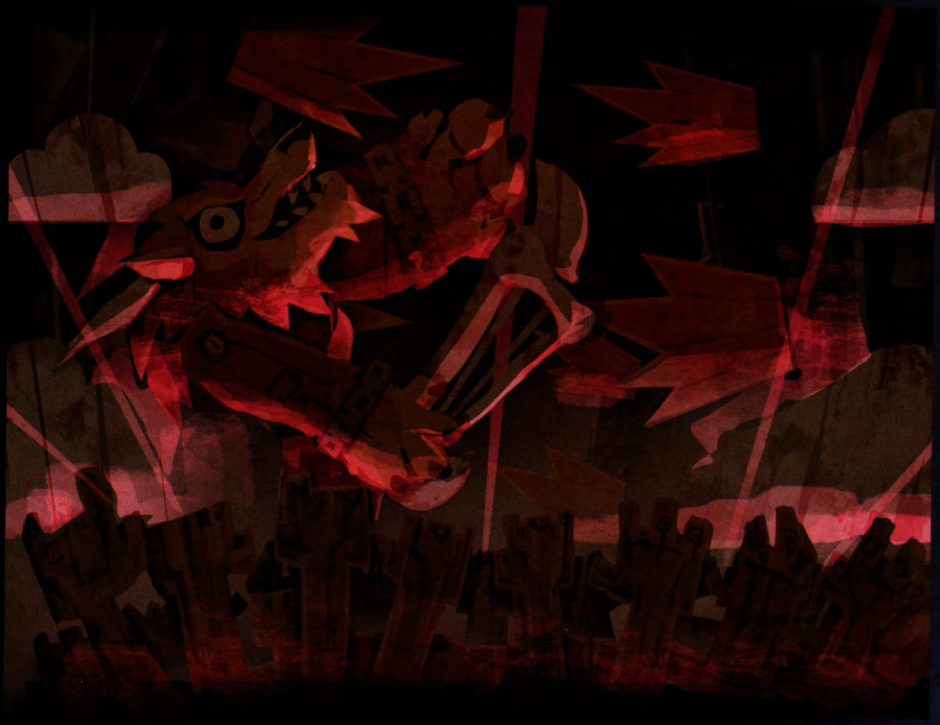


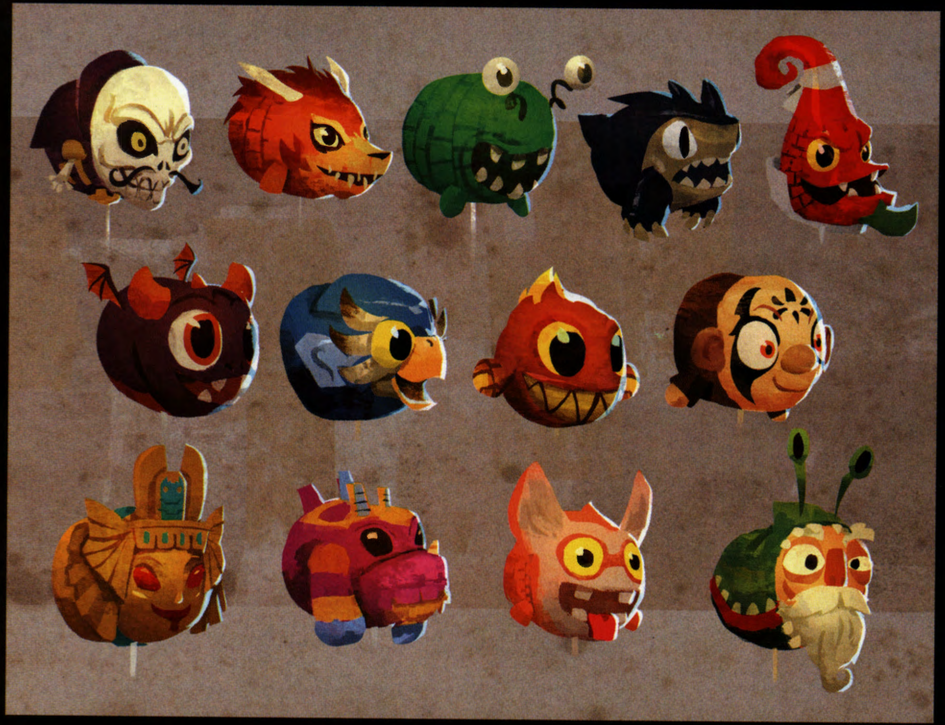


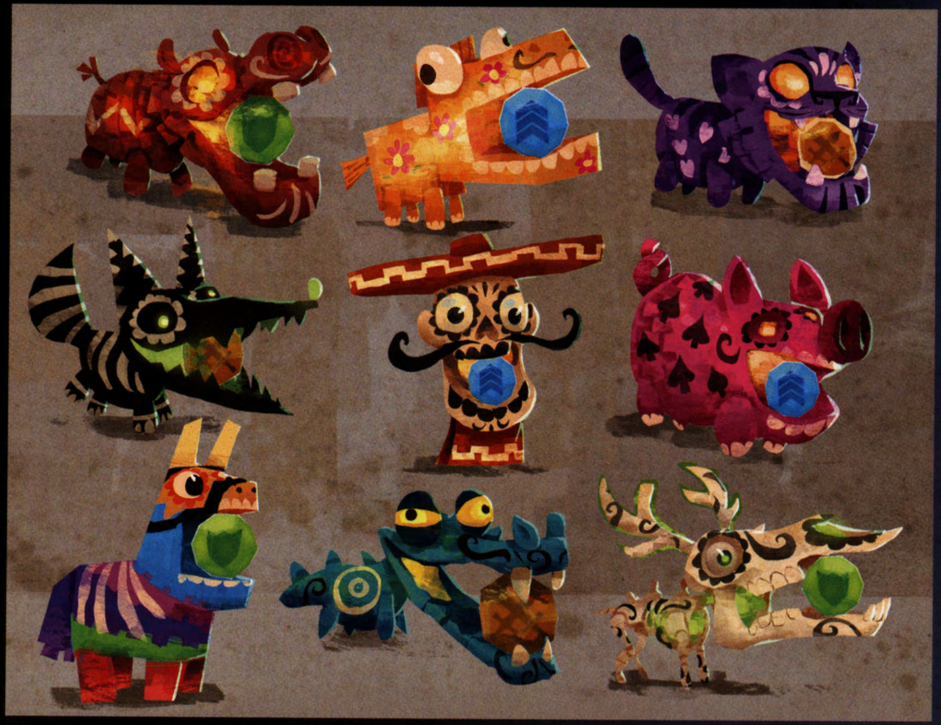


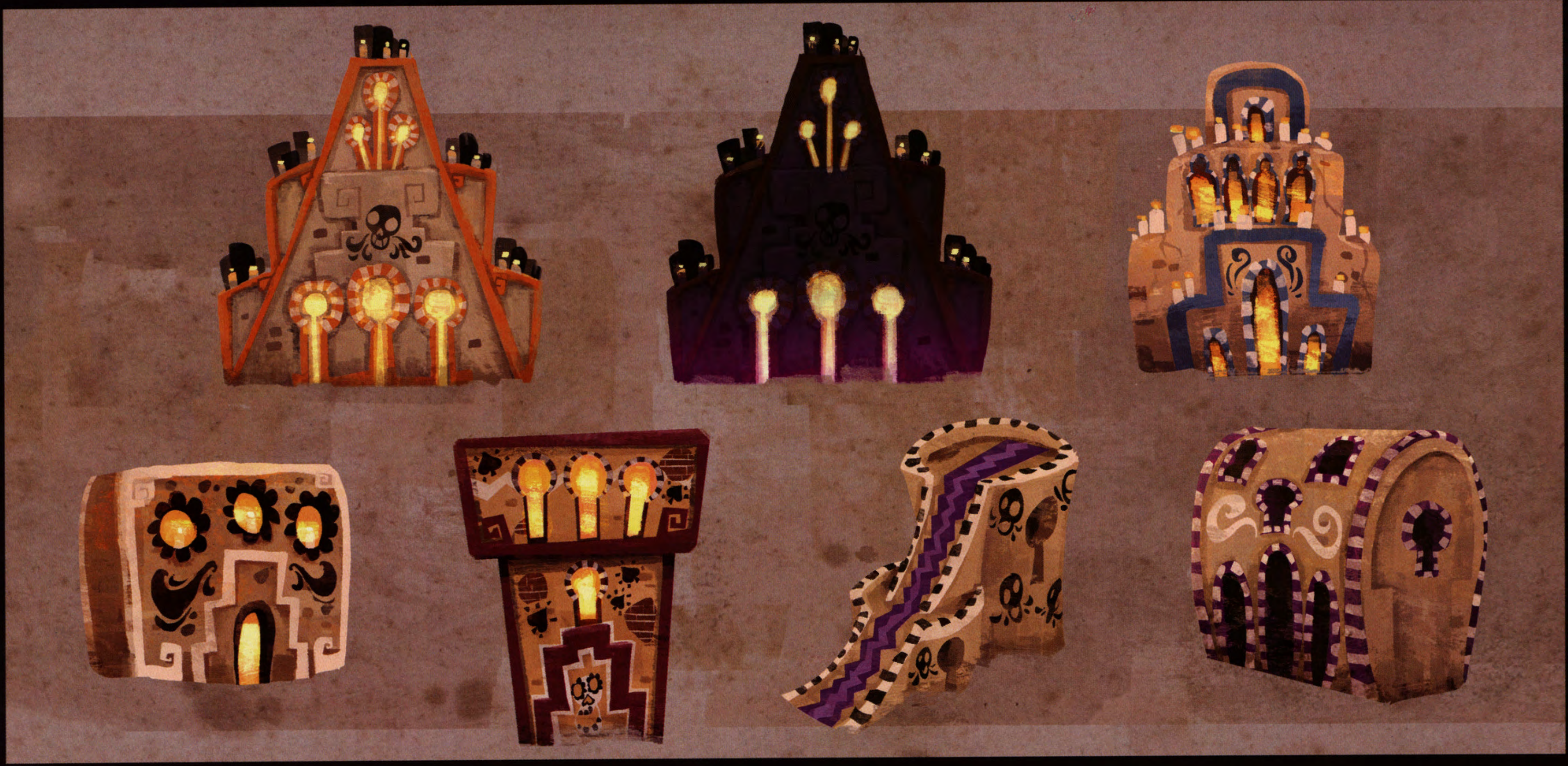


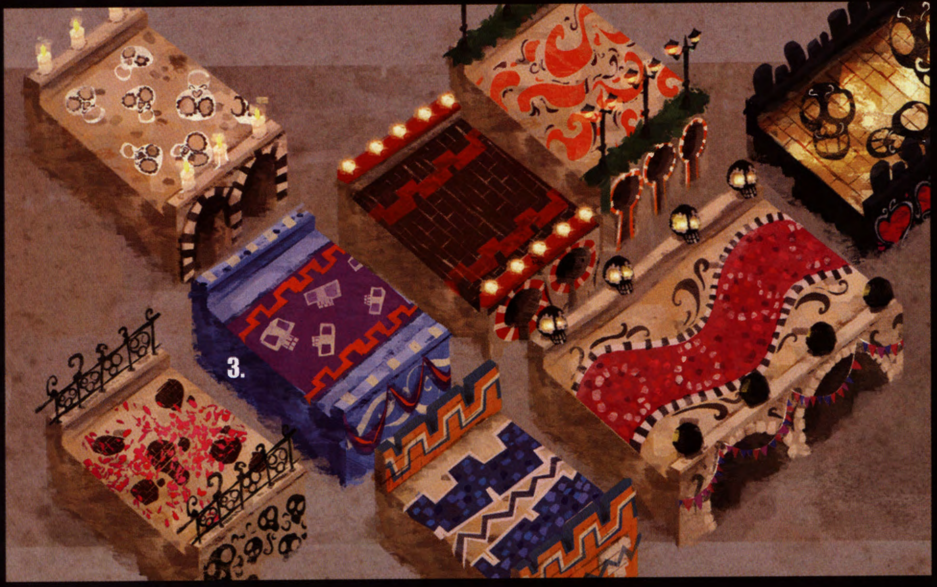








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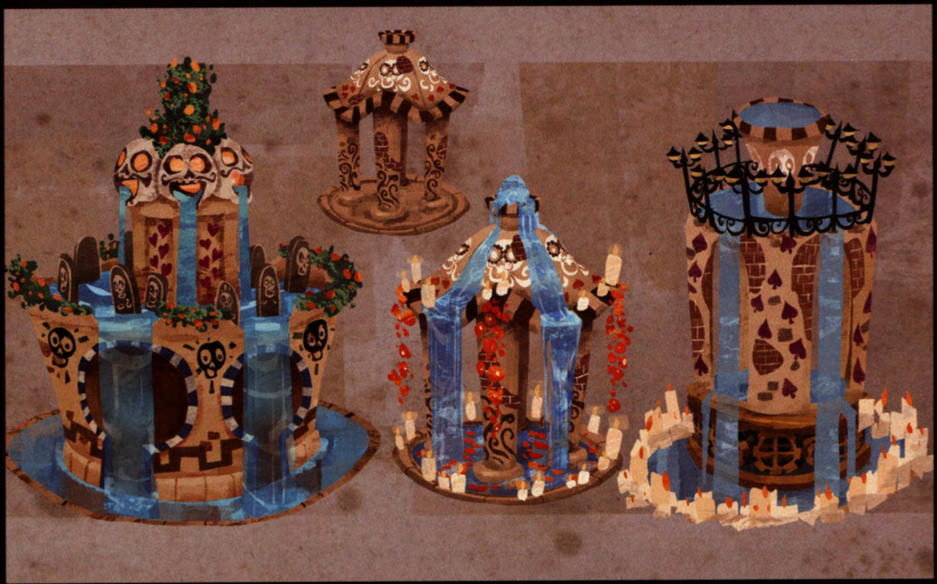
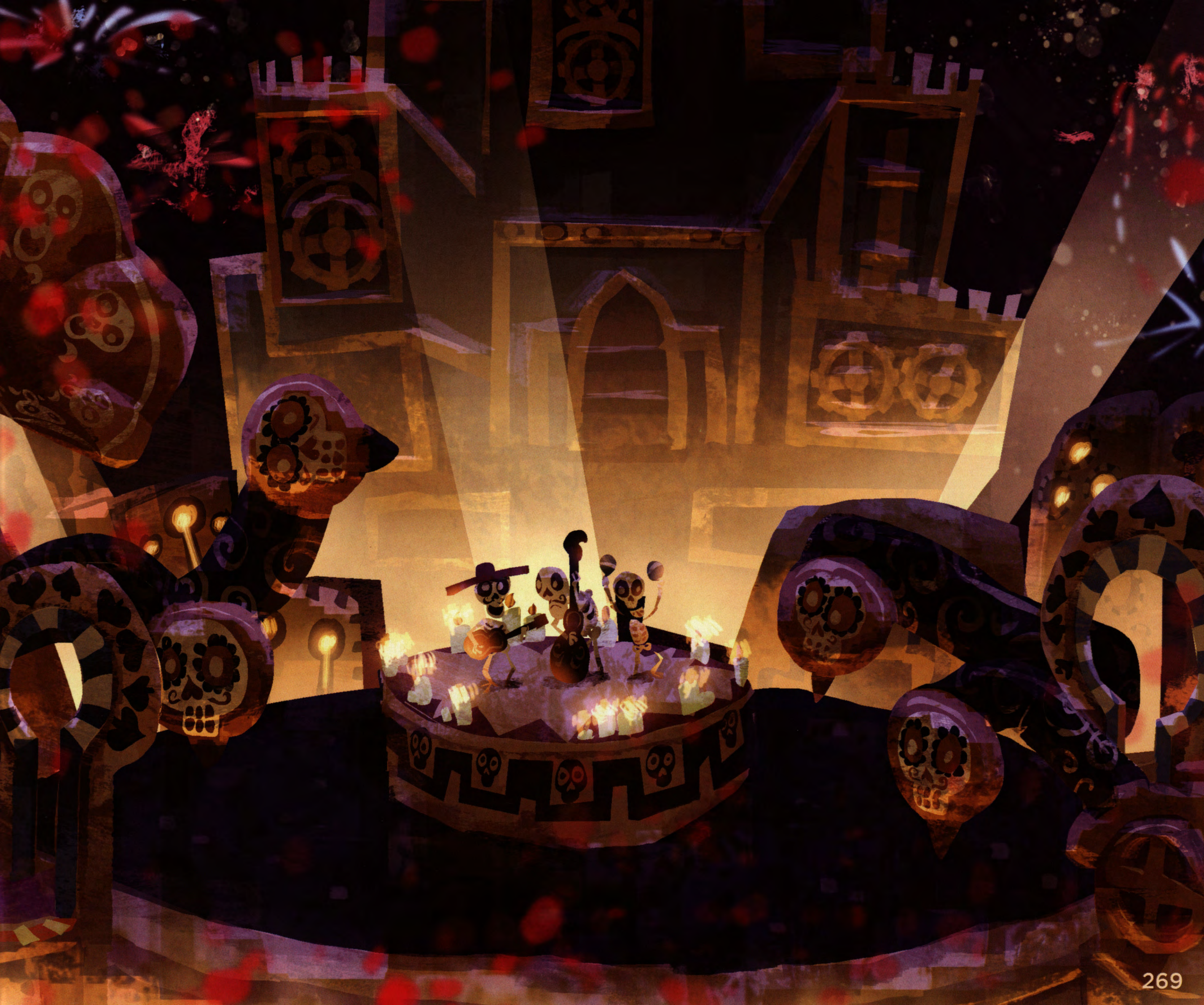
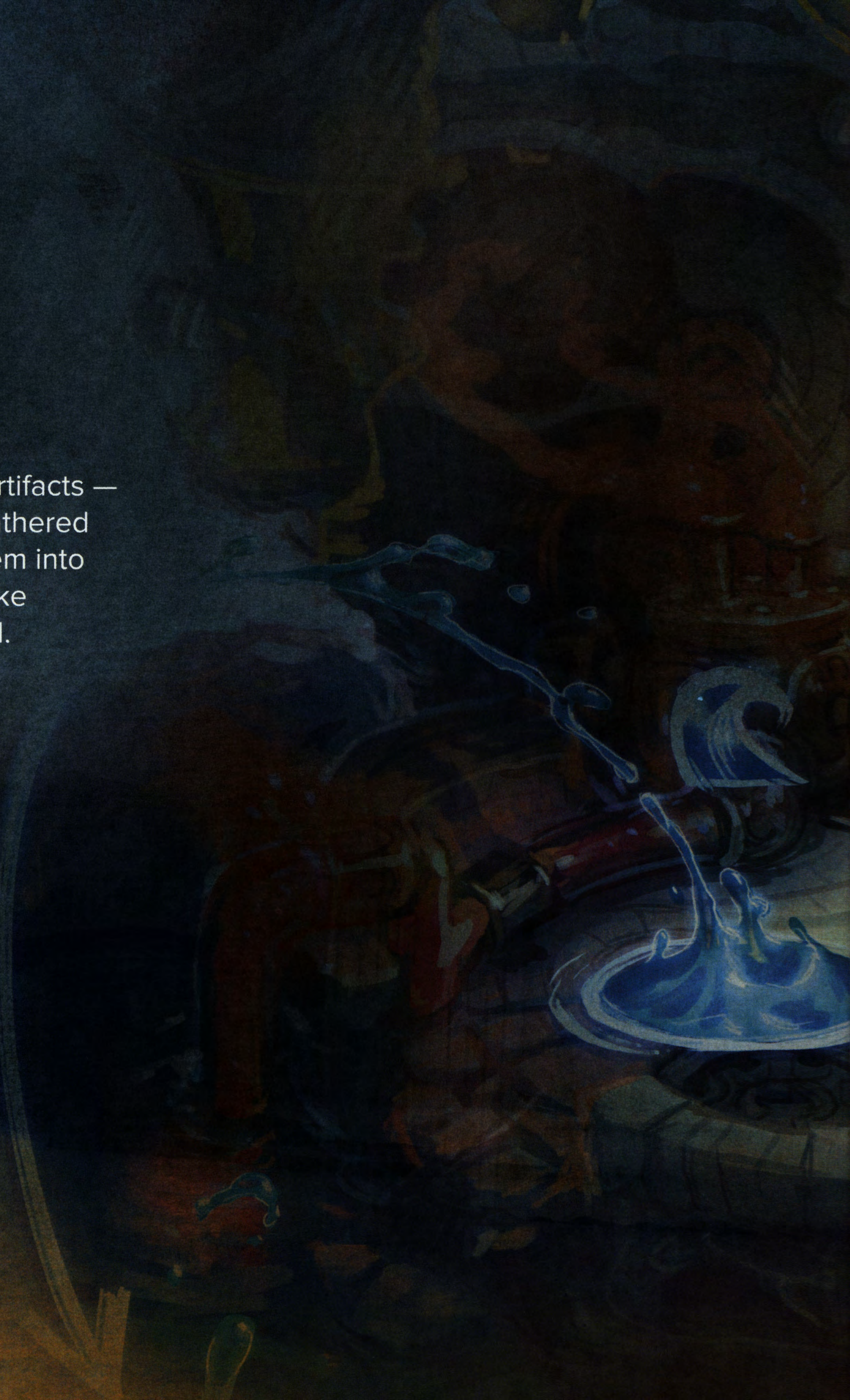




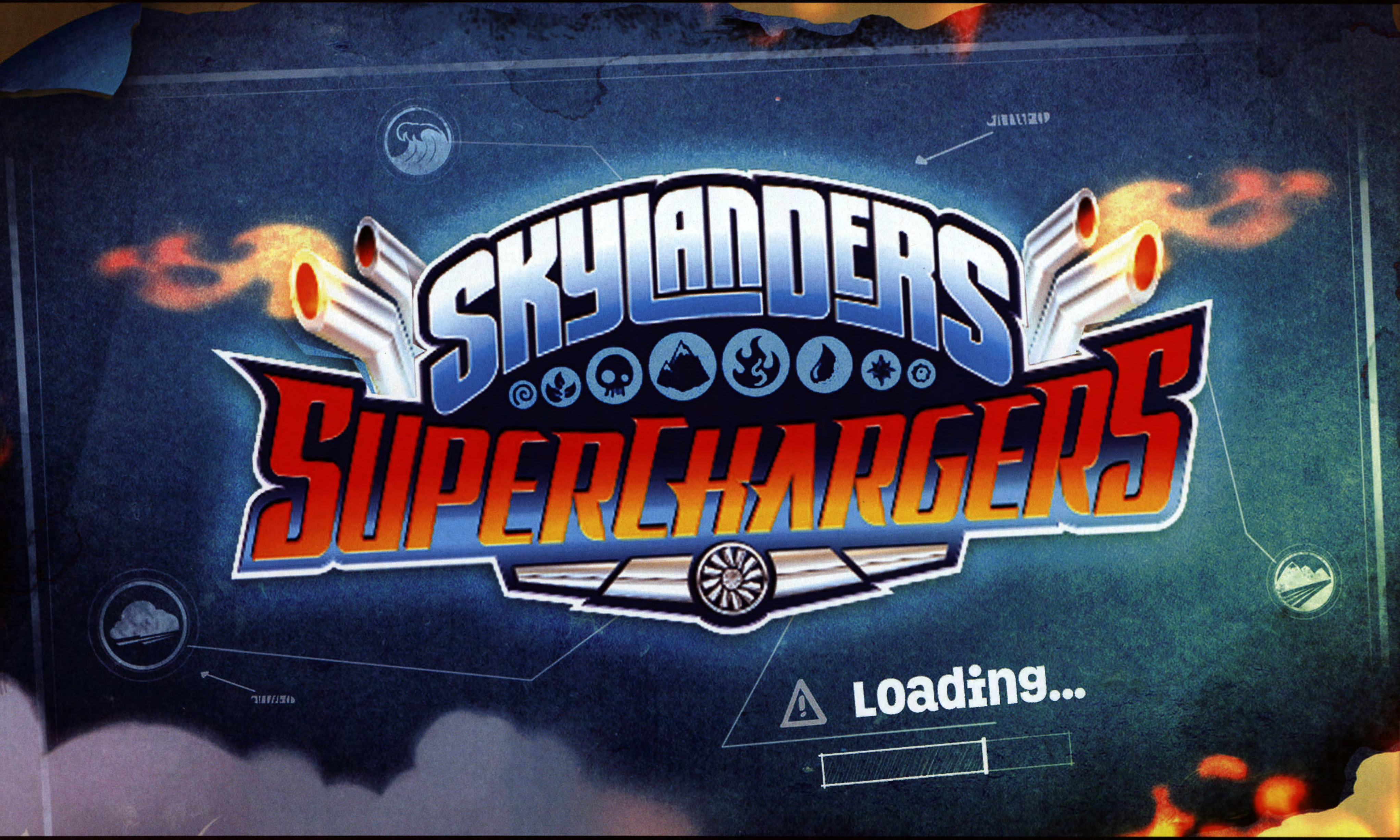
Our aim with the UI was to make it feel full of artifacts — magical objects, made from real materials, weathered from an epic journey. Integrating our VFX system into the UI tools allowed us, for the first time, to make screens feel as magical as we'd always wanted.

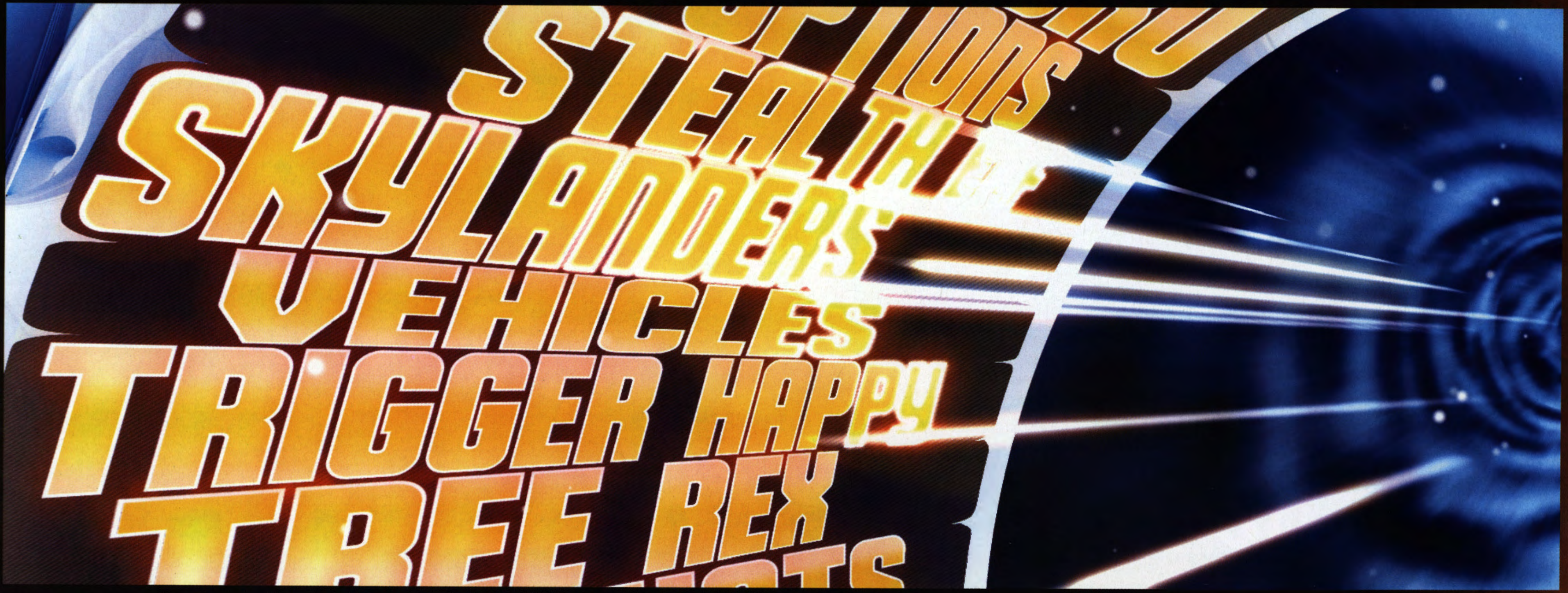
– Stephen Moss

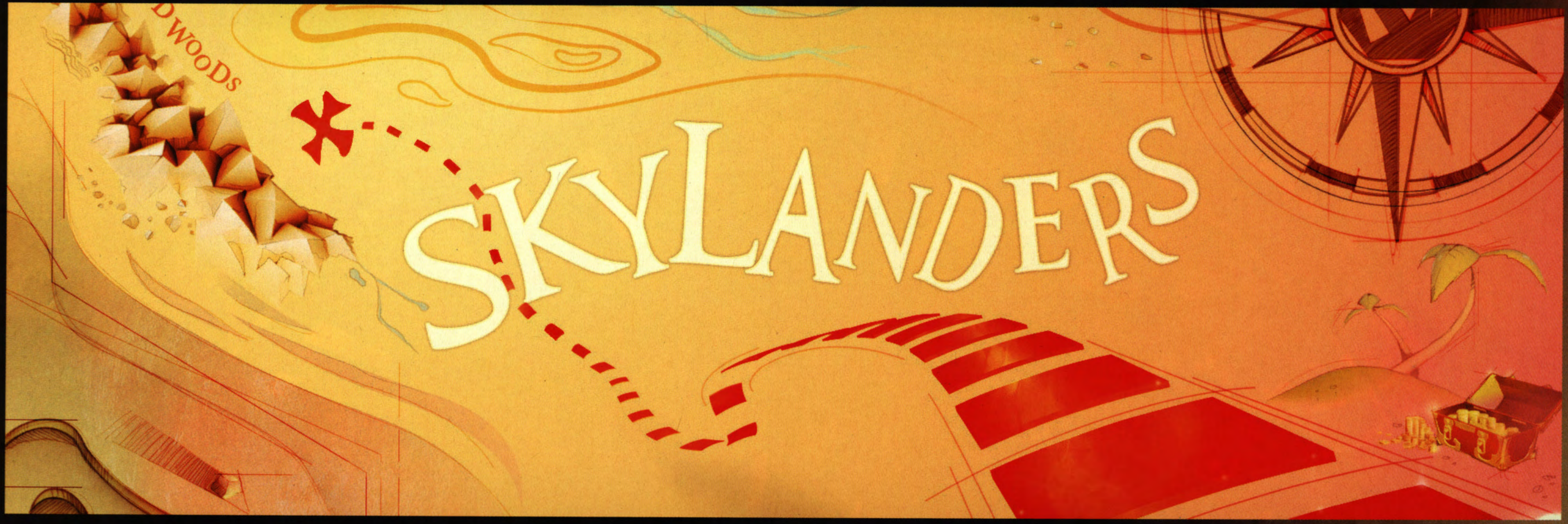


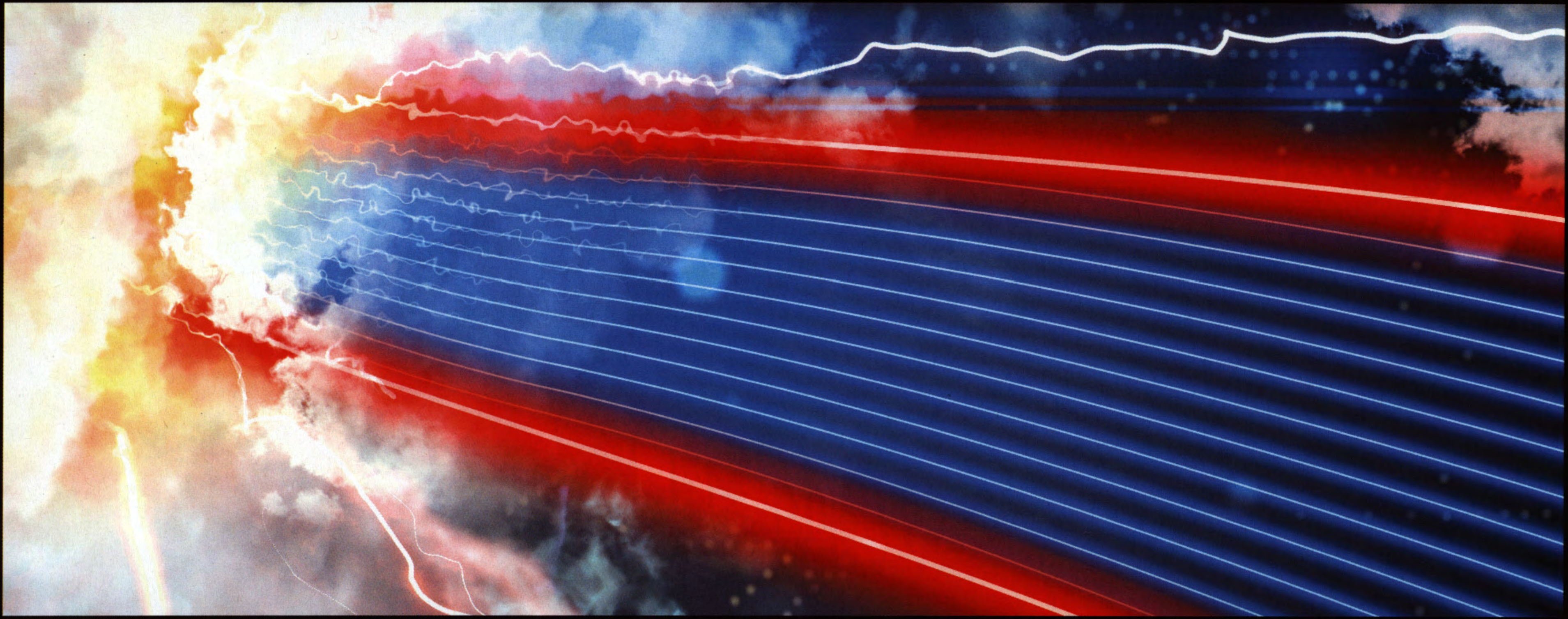
HUSTLE & FLOW

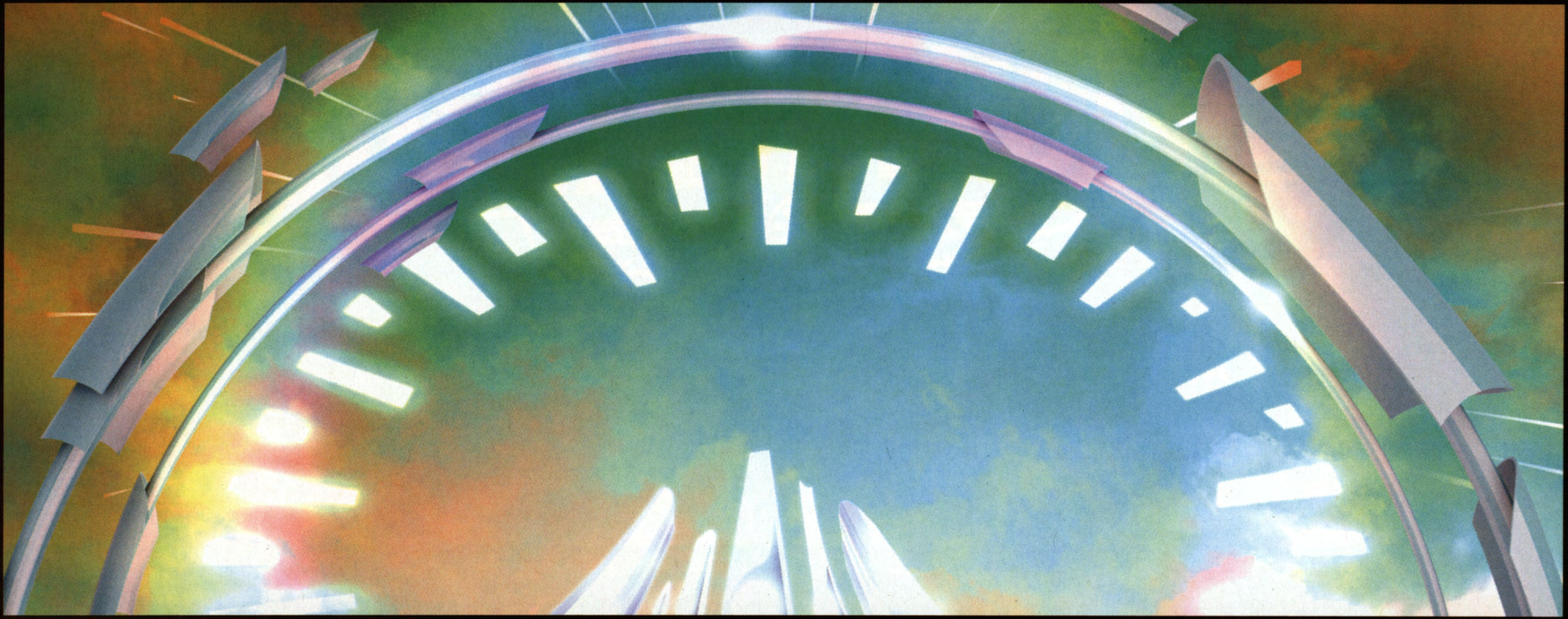
USER INTERFACE

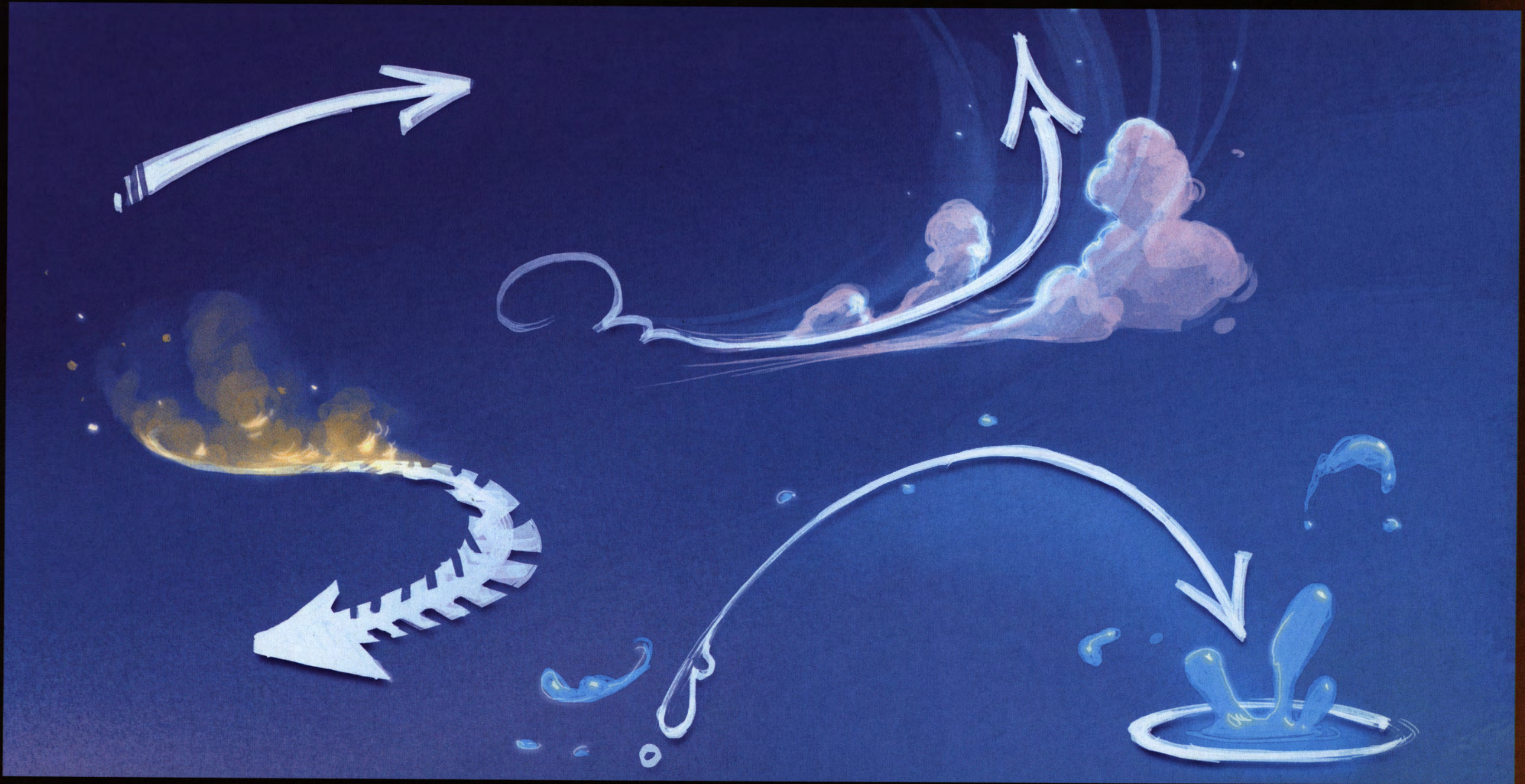

SKYLANDERS
SUPERCHARGERS
Loading...

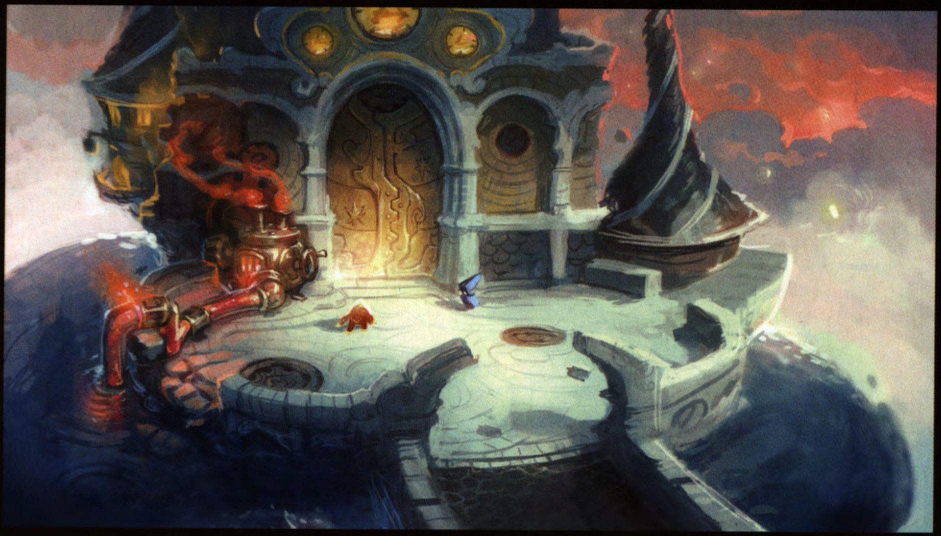

OPTIONS
STEALTH ELF
SKYLANDERS
VEHICLES
TRIGGER HAPPY
TREE REX

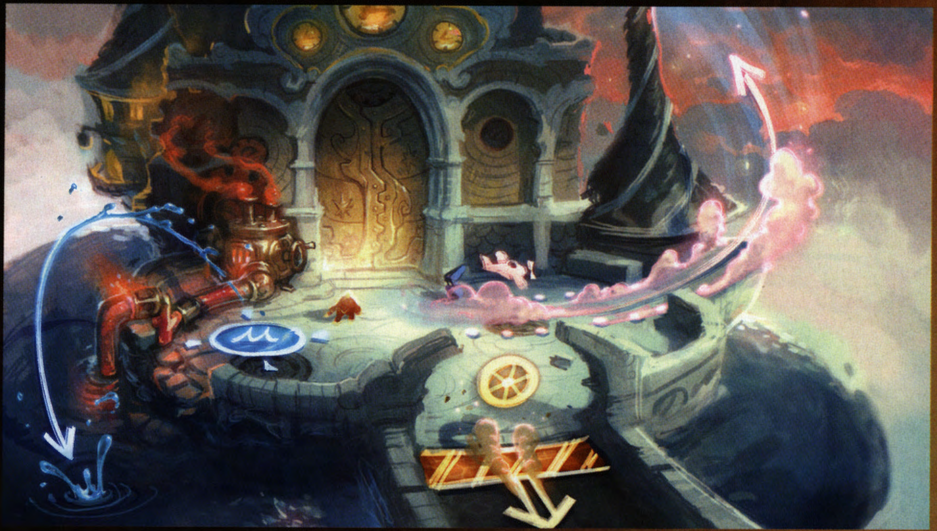

D WOODS
SKYLANDERS

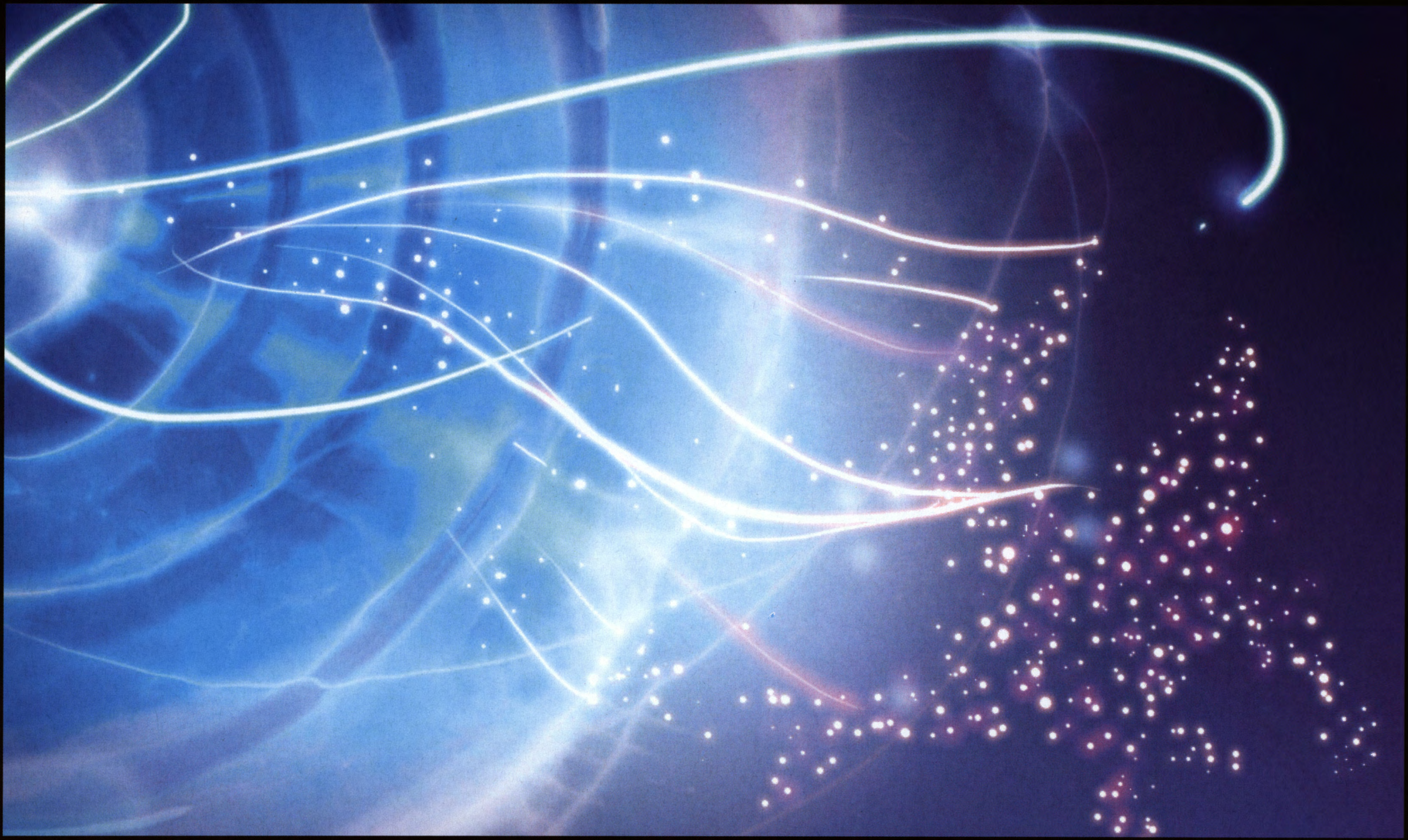


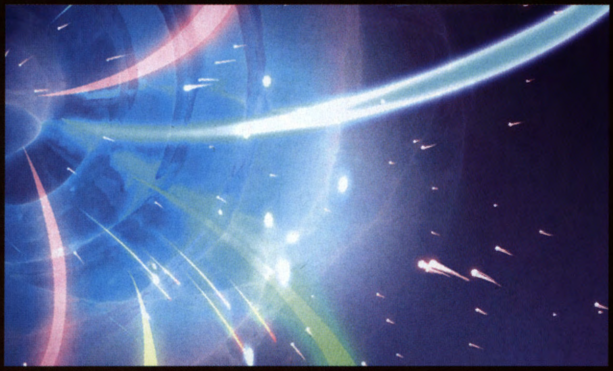


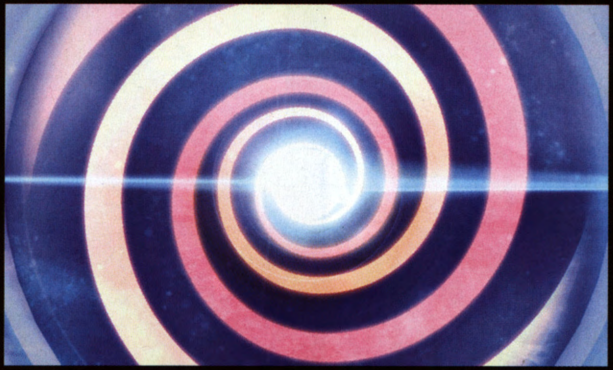


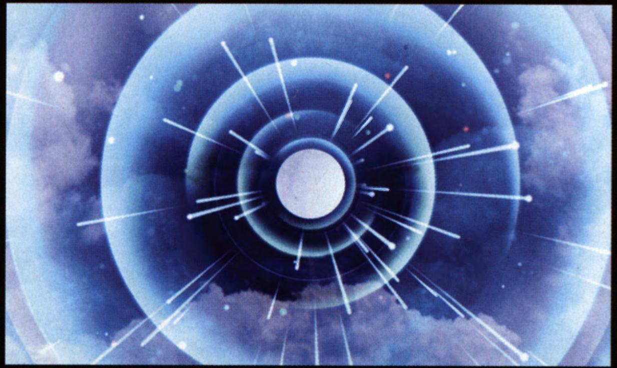


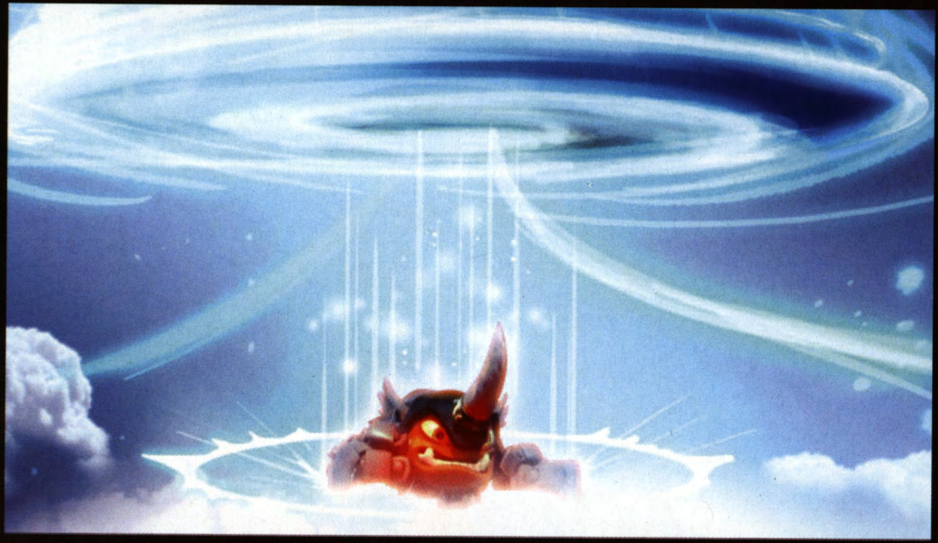


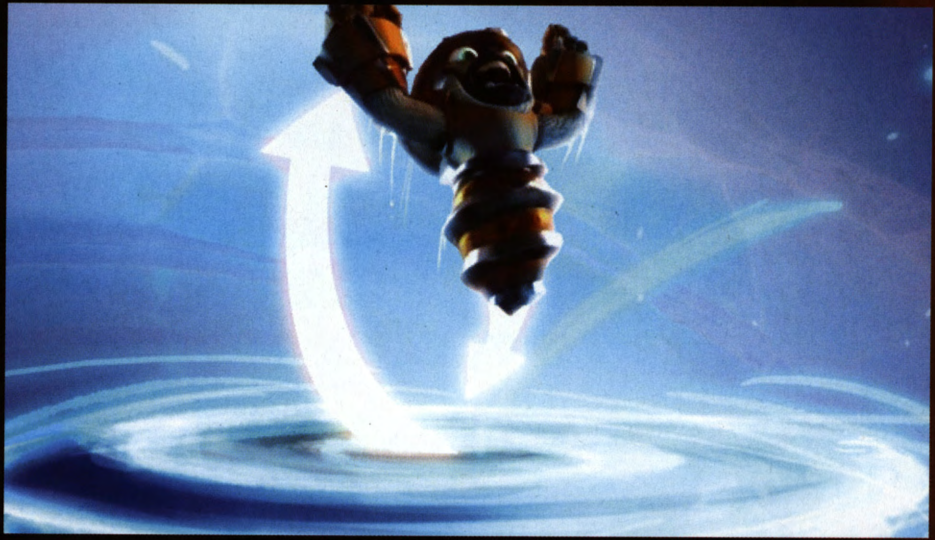


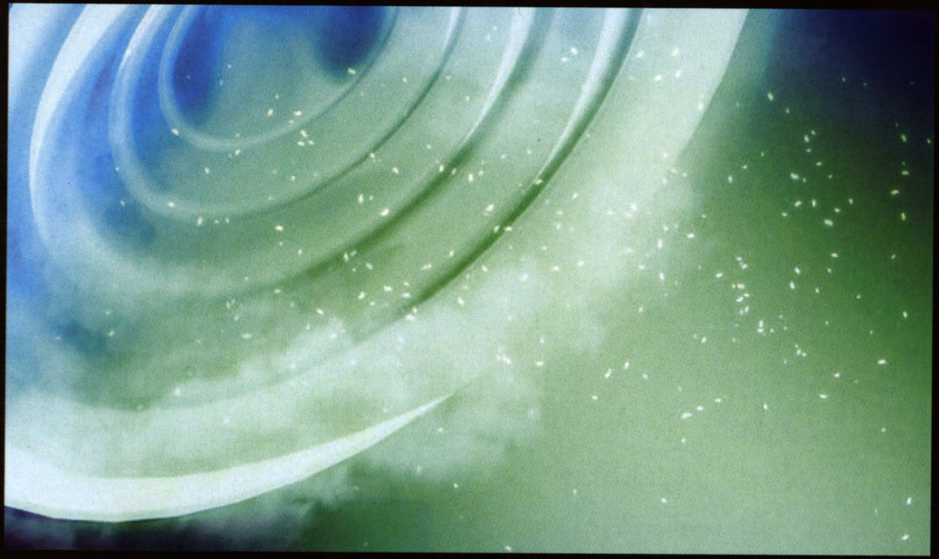


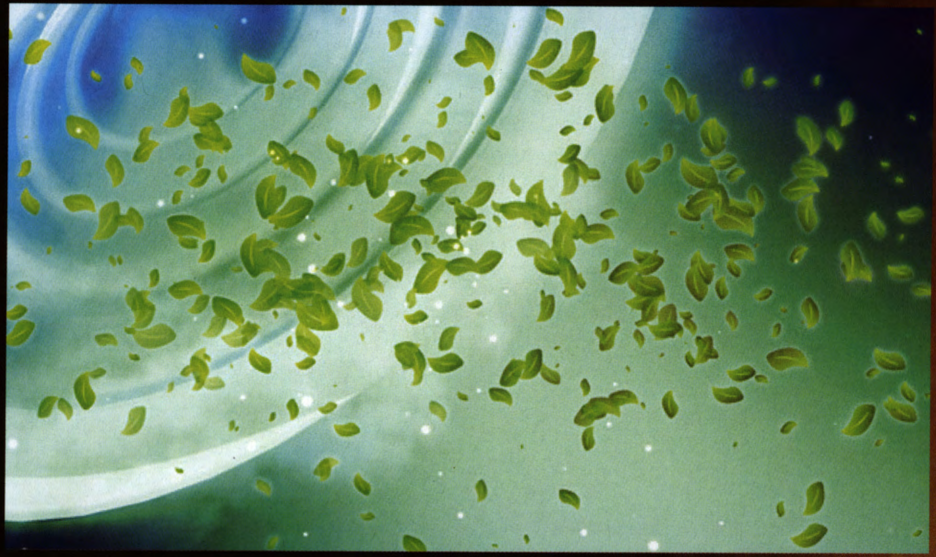


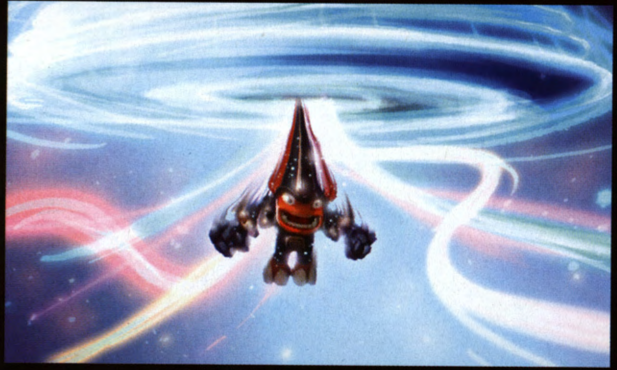


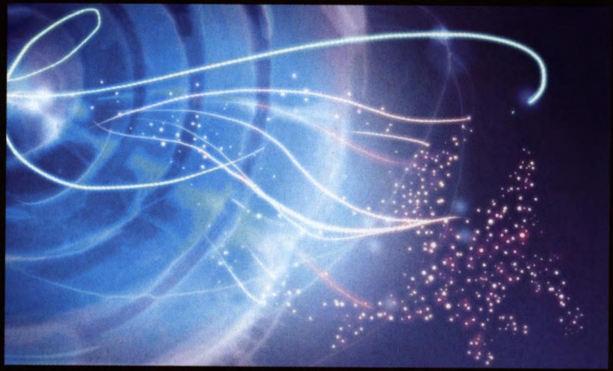


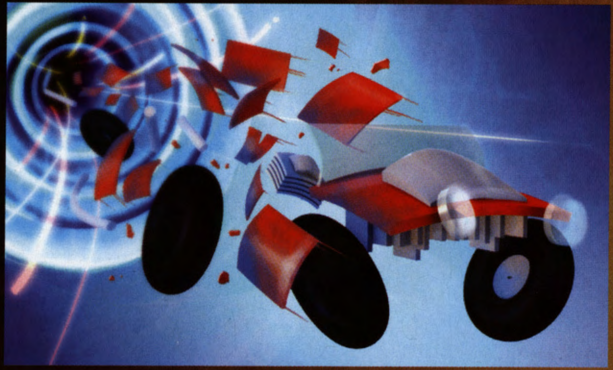


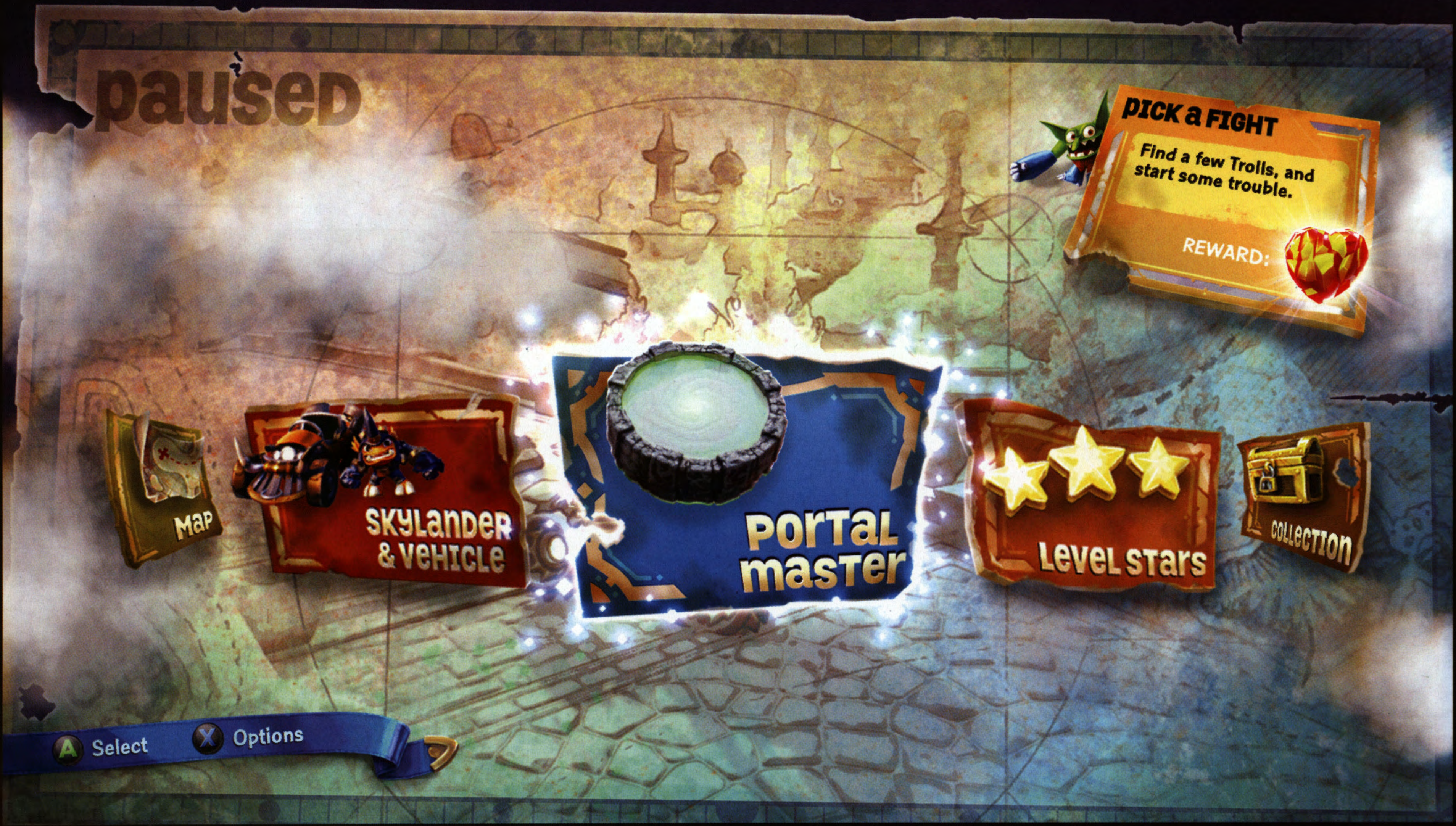










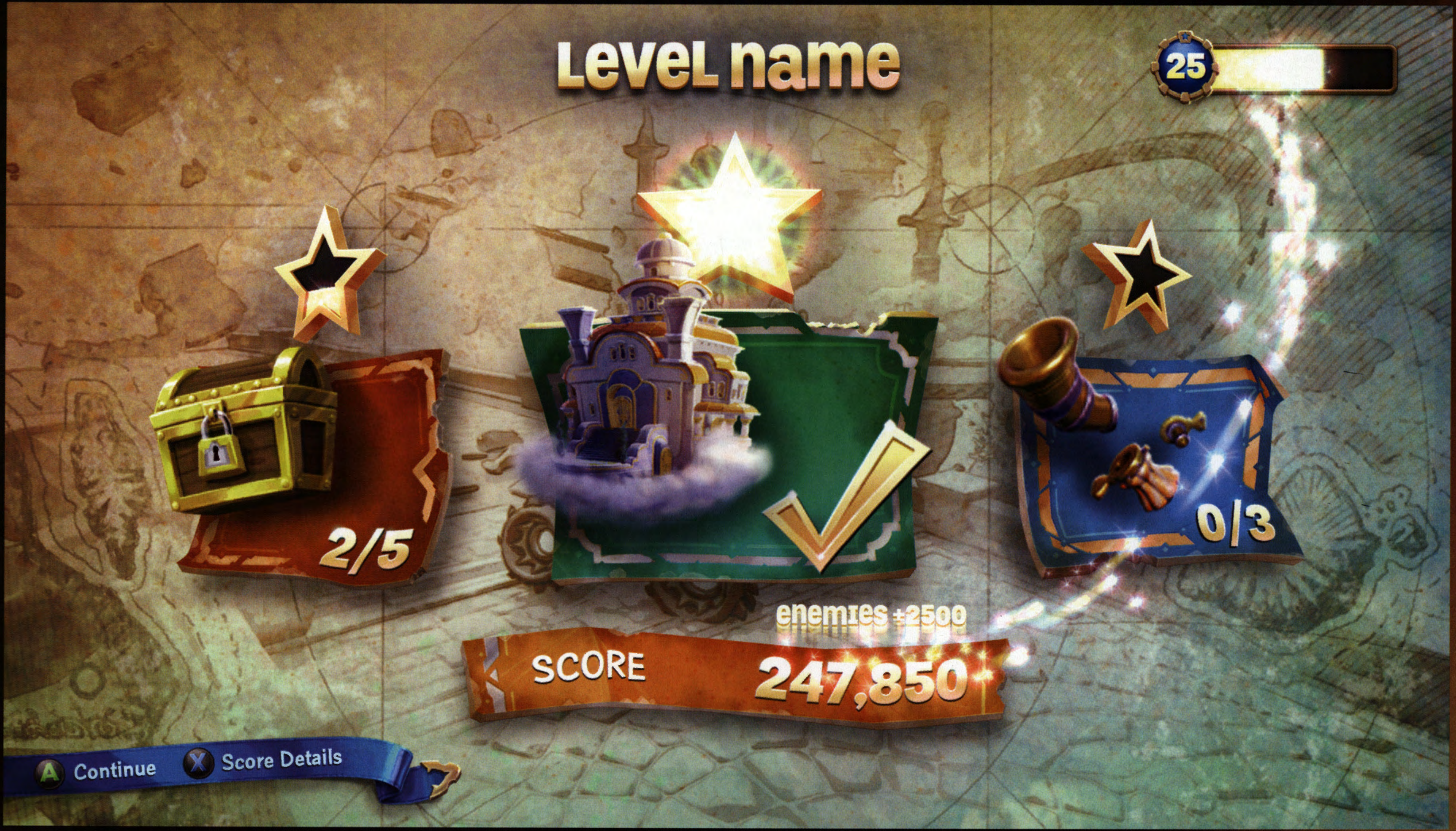


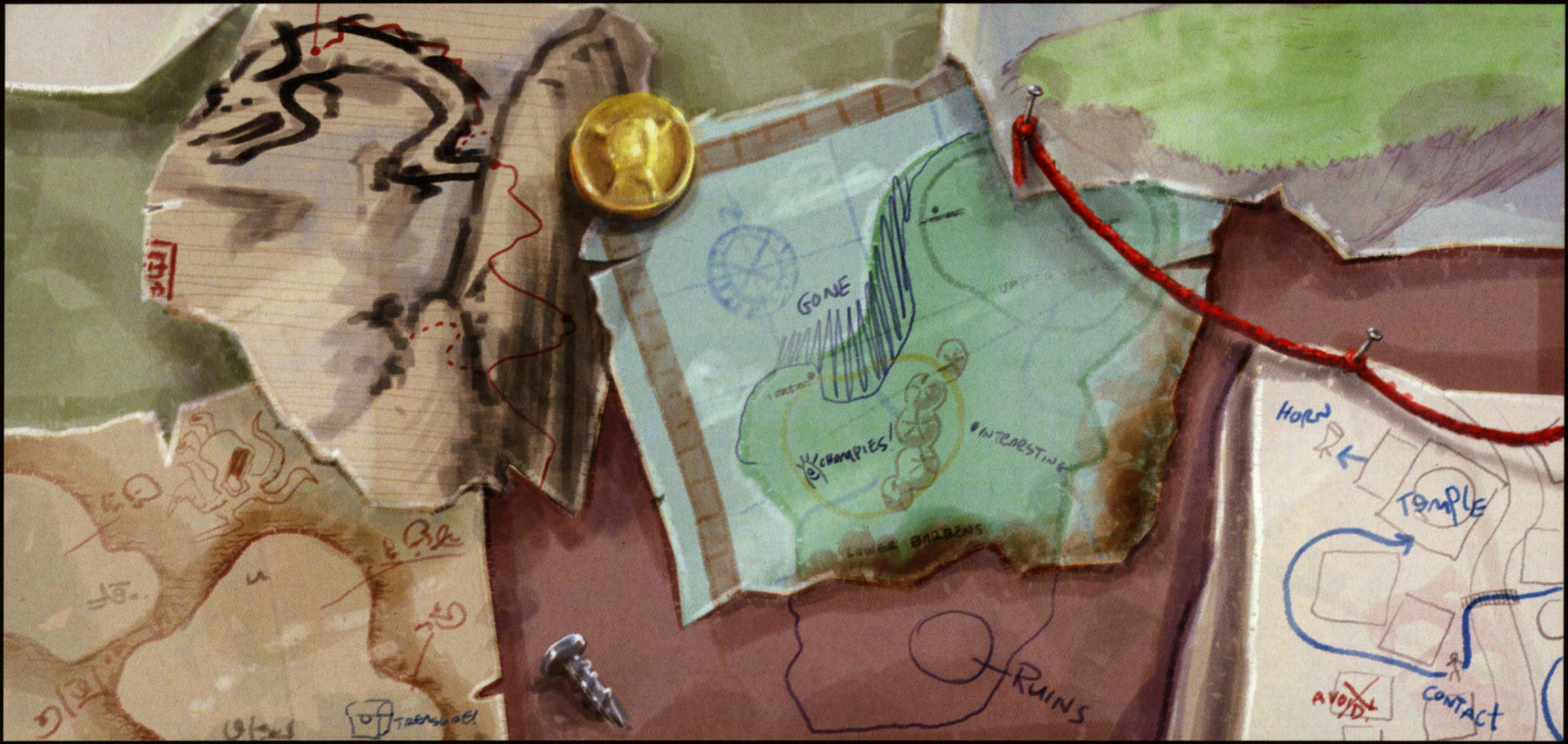
paused
Map
Skylander & Vehicle
Portal master
Level stars
Collection
A Select
X Options

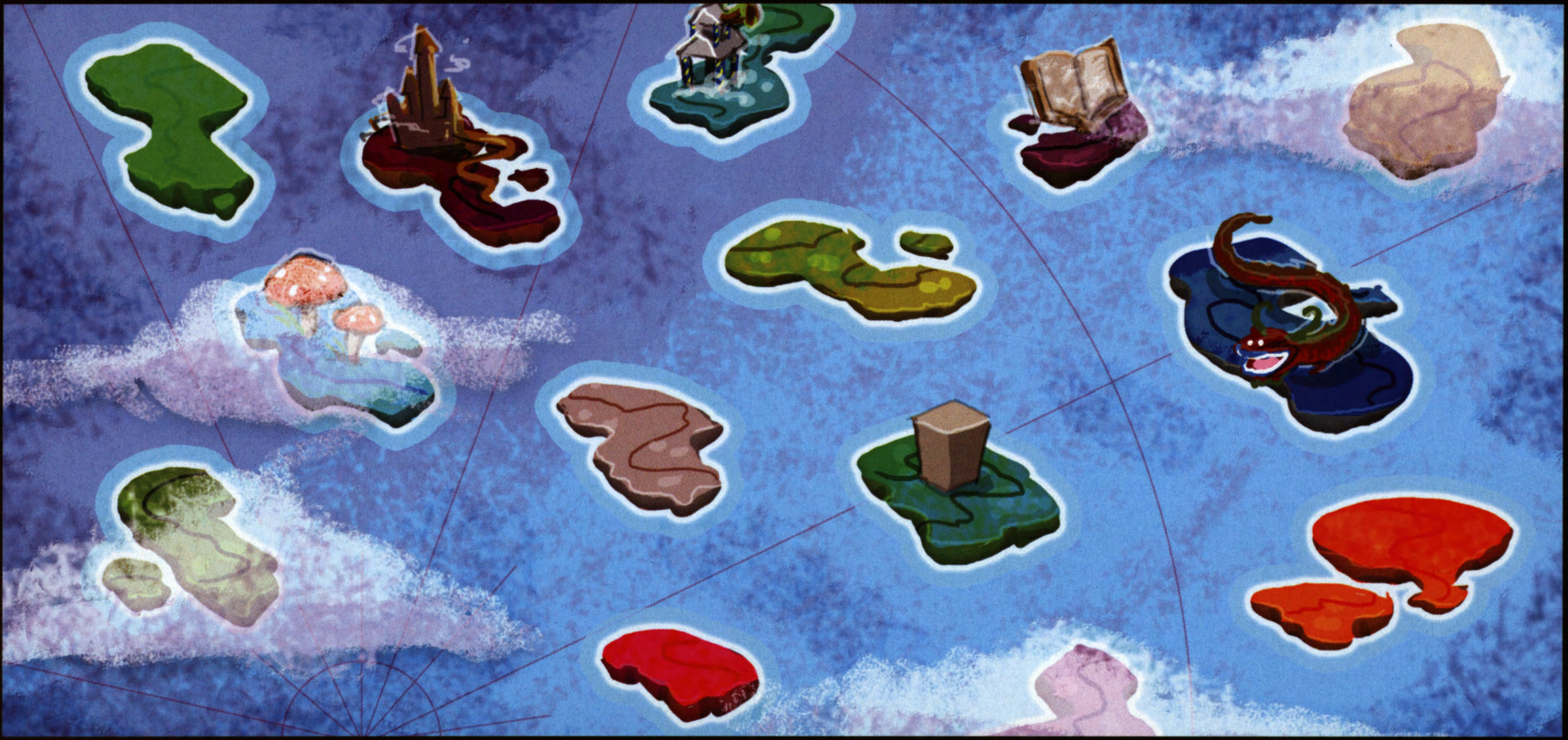
PICK a FIGHT

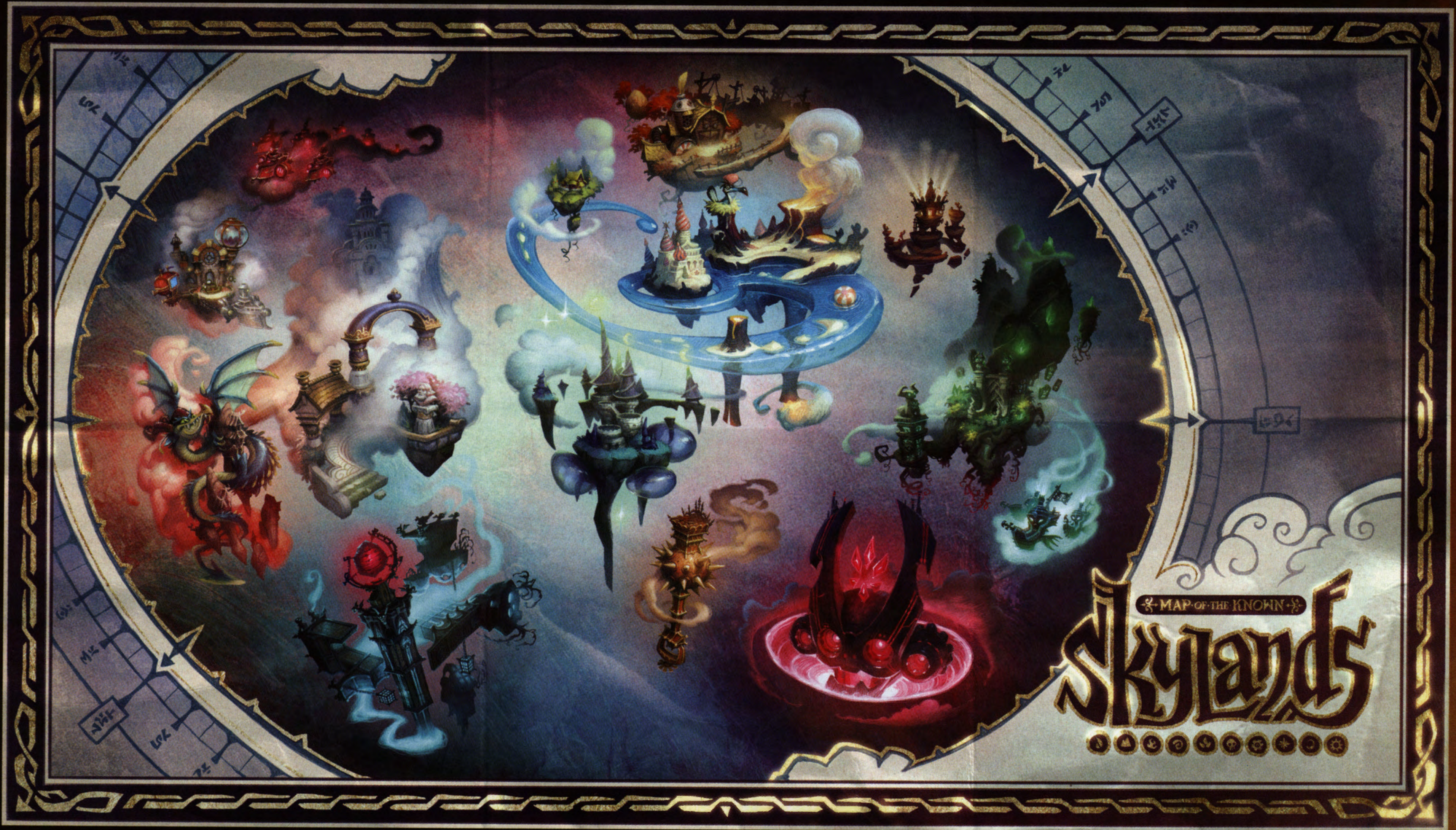
Find a few Trolls, and start some trouble.

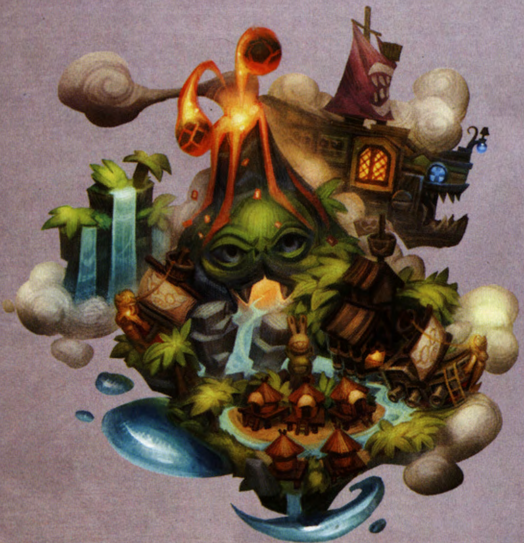
REWARD:

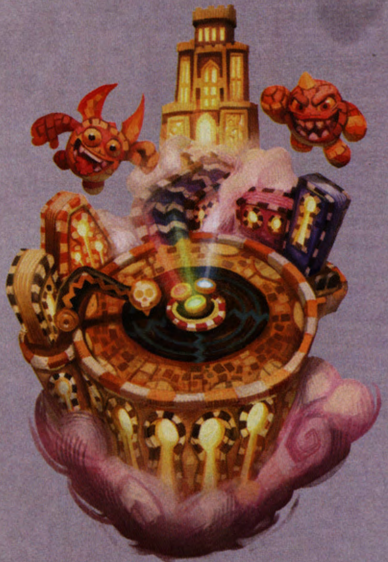

Level name
25
2/5
0/3
enemies +2500
SCORE
247,850
A Continue
X Score Details

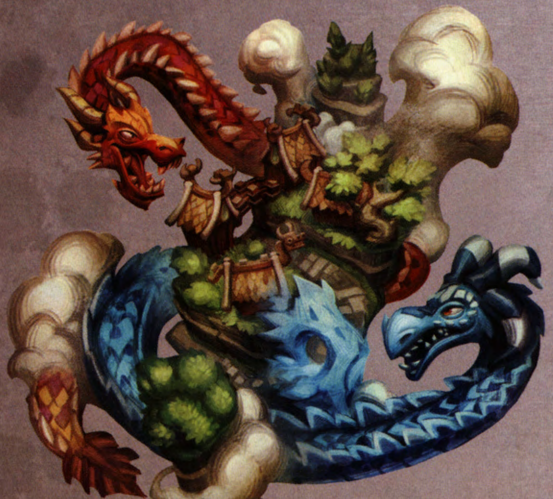

GONE
CHOMPIES!
INTERESTING
LOWER GARDENS
RUINS
HORN
TEMPLE
AVOID
CONTACT
TREASURE!

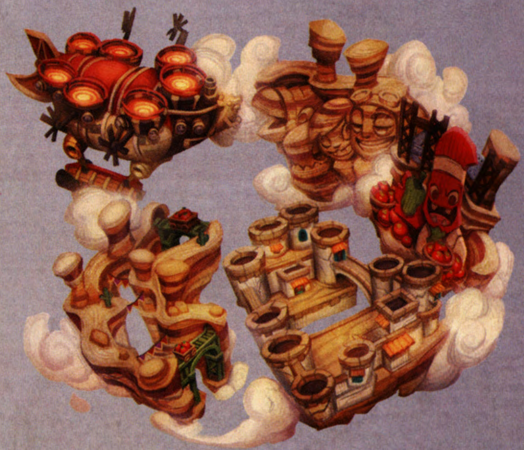


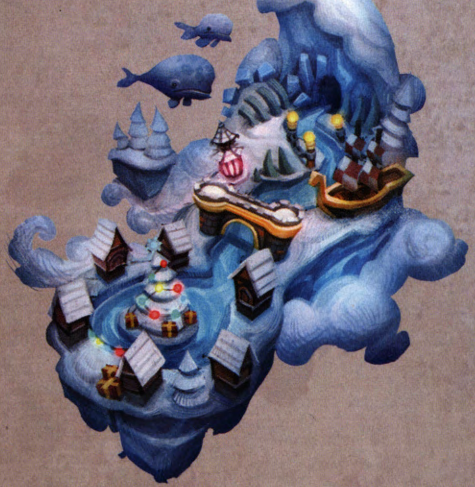

MAP OF THE KNOWN
Skylands

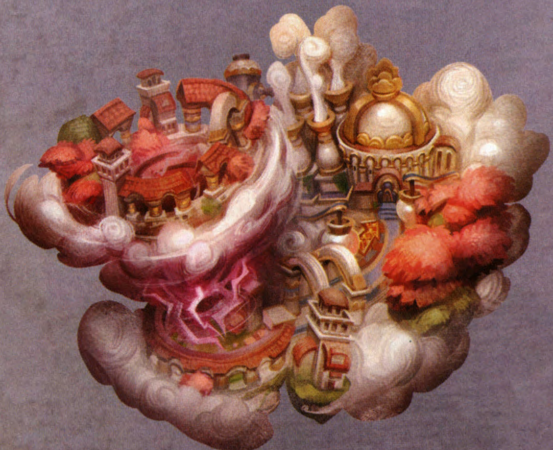


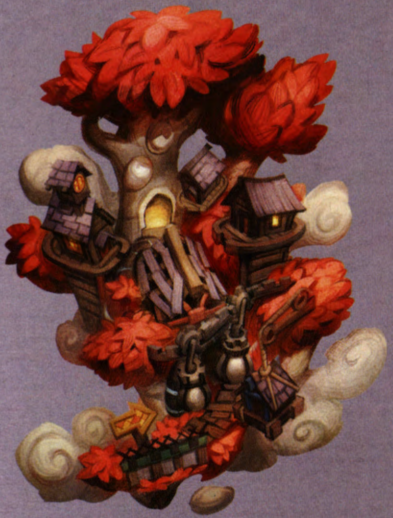


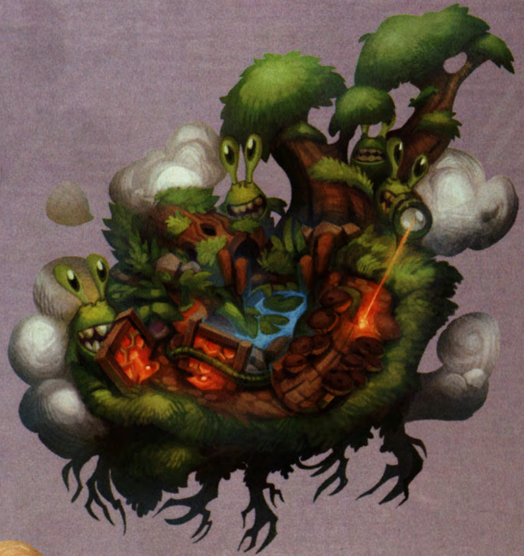


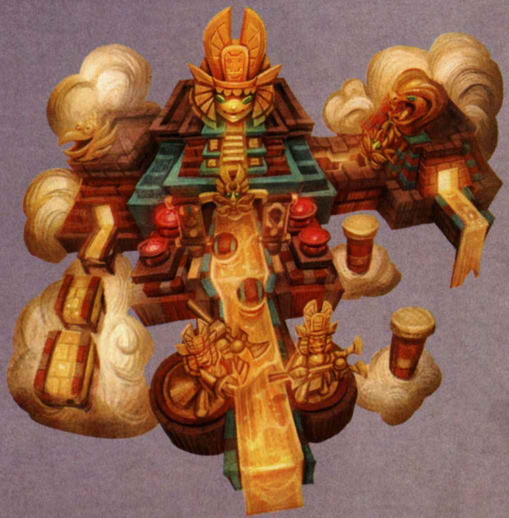


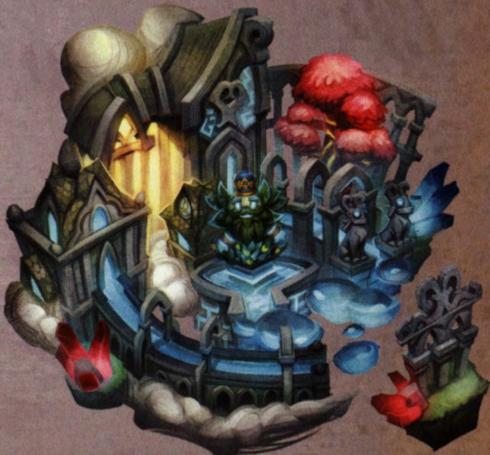


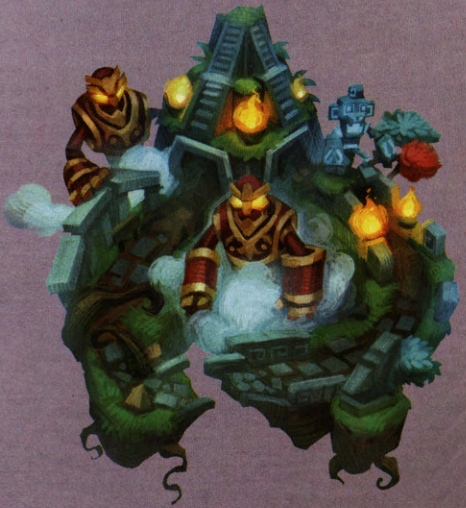


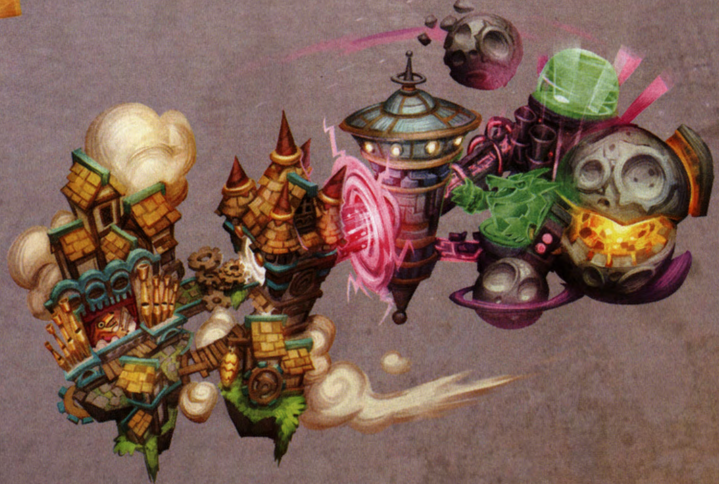


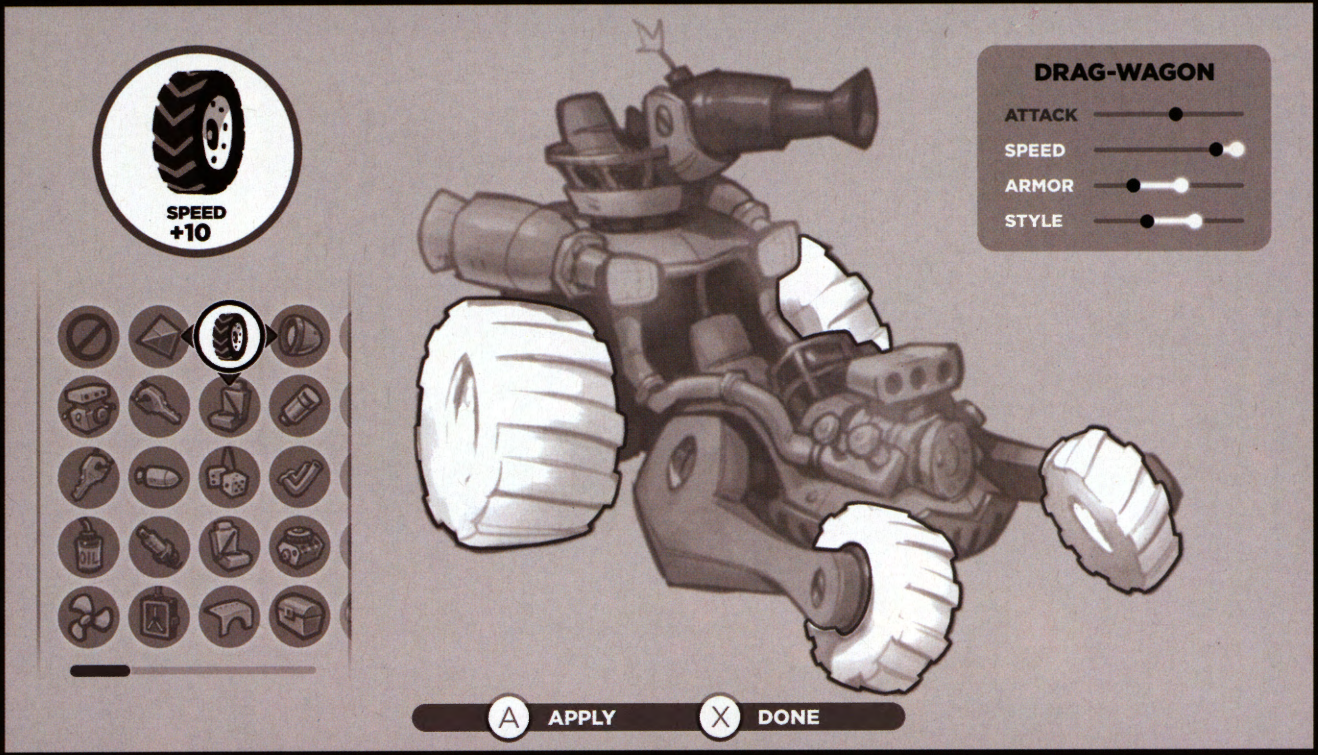


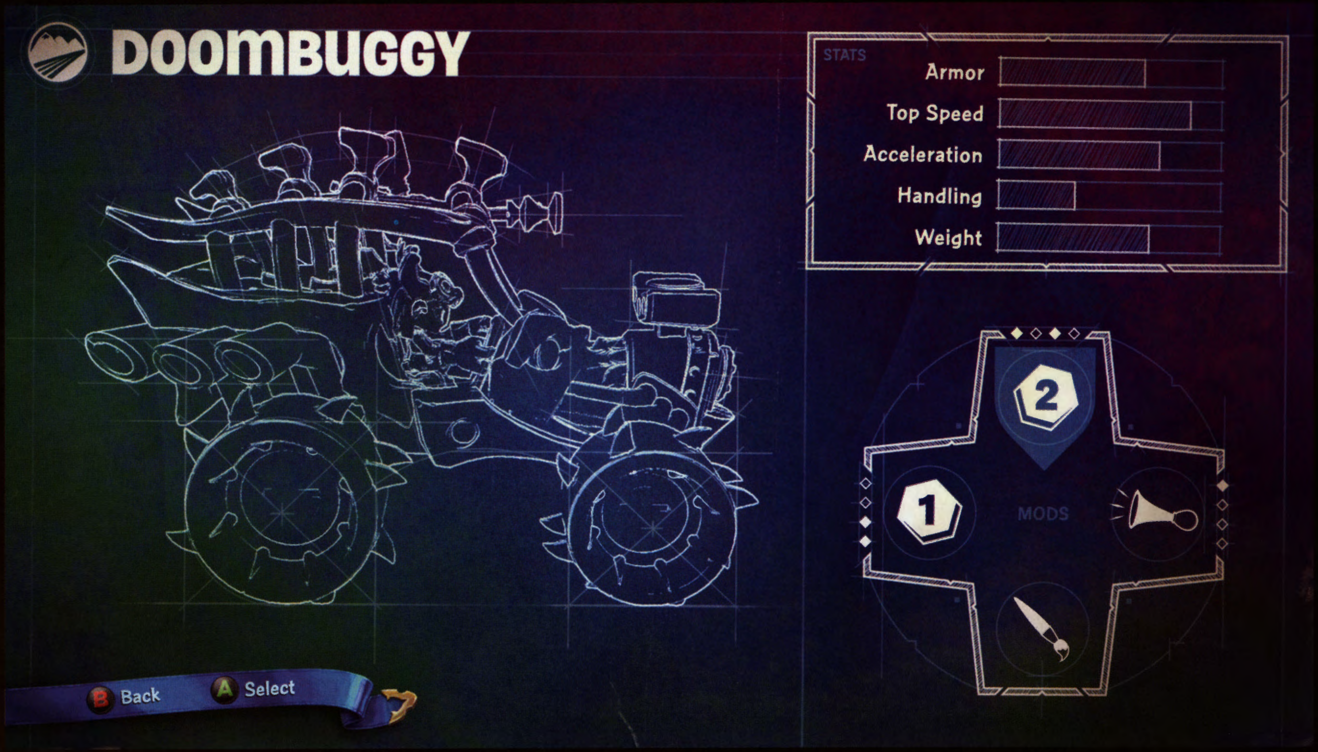


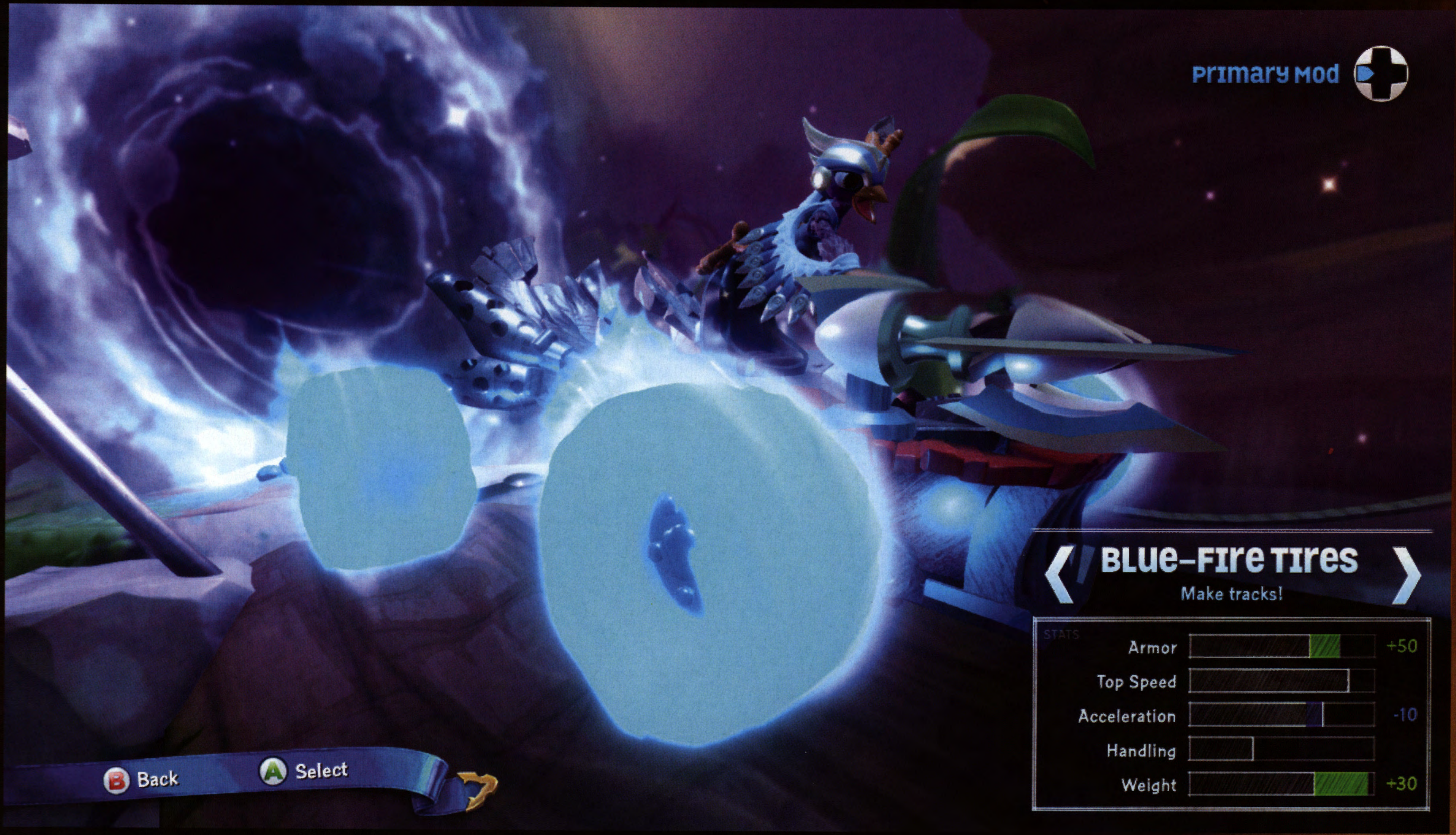







SPEED
+10
DRAG-WAGON
ATTACK
SPEED
ARMOR
STYLE
A APPLY
X DONE

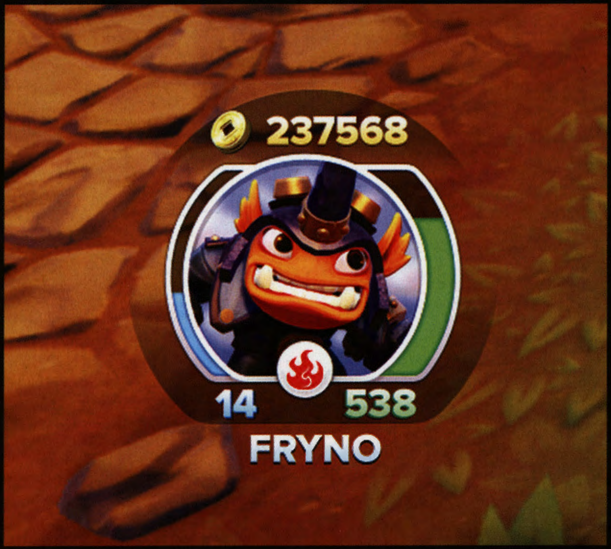

DOOMBUGGY
STATS
Armor
Top Speed
Acceleration
Handling
Weight
2
1
MODS
B Back
A Select


Primary Mod
Blue-Fire Tires
Make tracks!
B Back
A Select

STATS	
Armor	+50
Top Speed	
Acceleration	-10
Handling	
Weight	+30

It was really fun to work on a UI that was meant to feel like something physical, like we were concepting the mood of the game through the communication lens.

– Danielle Godbout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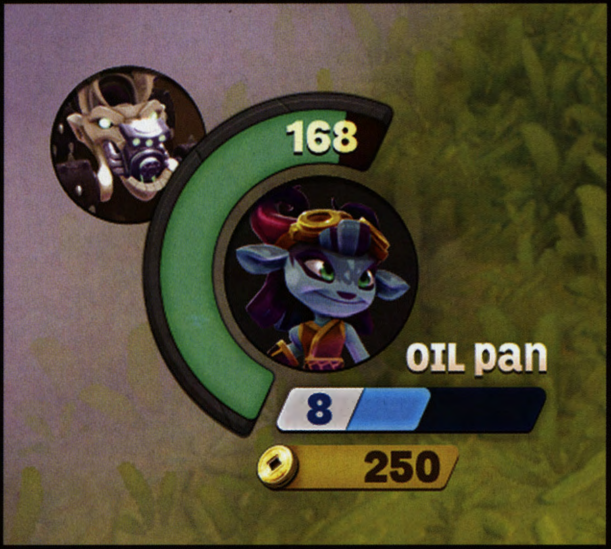
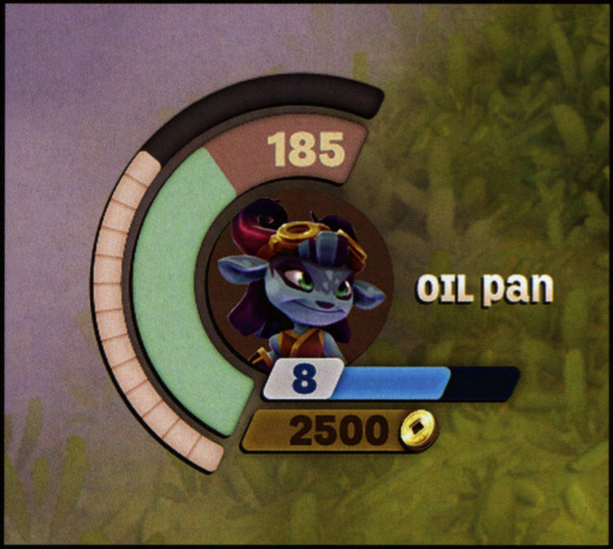
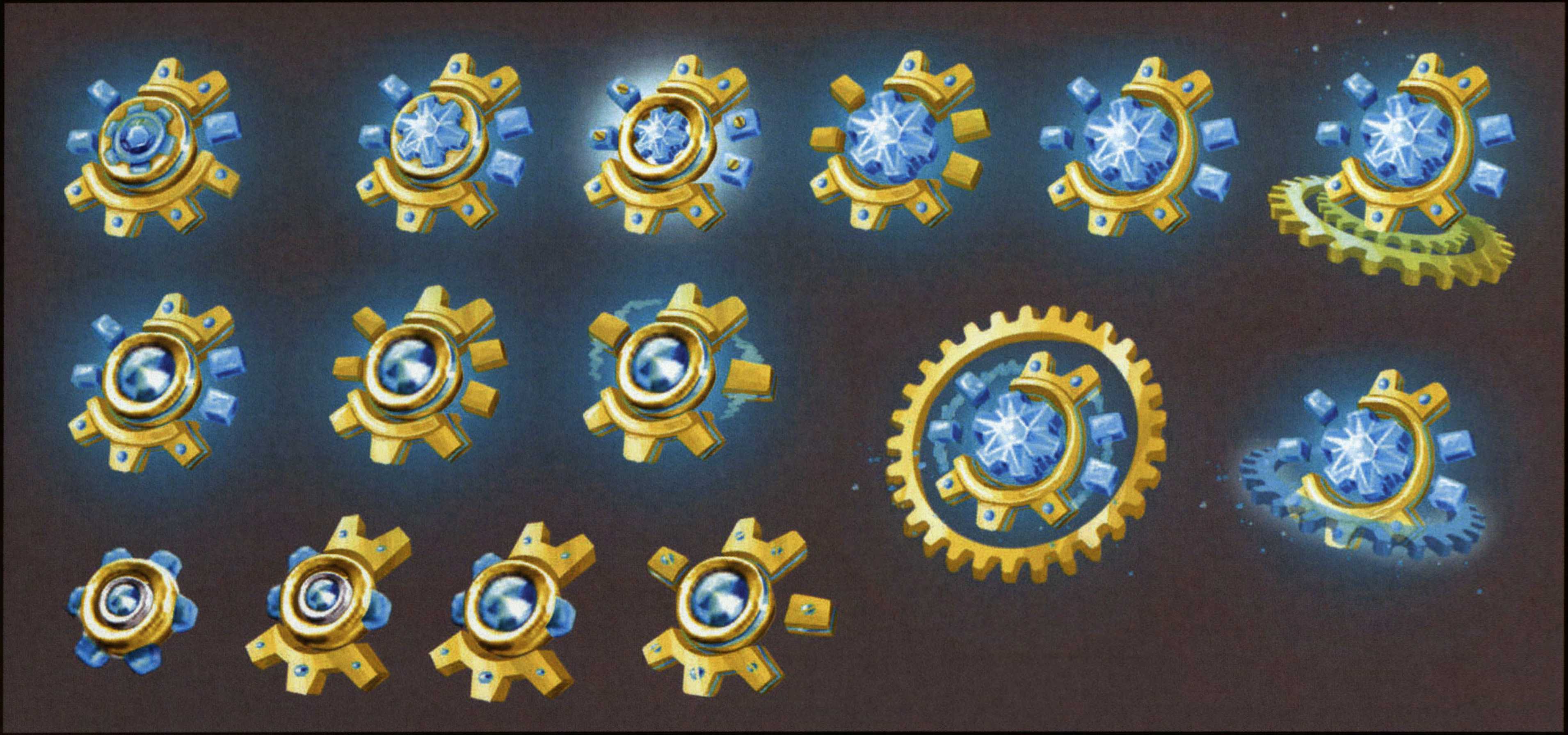
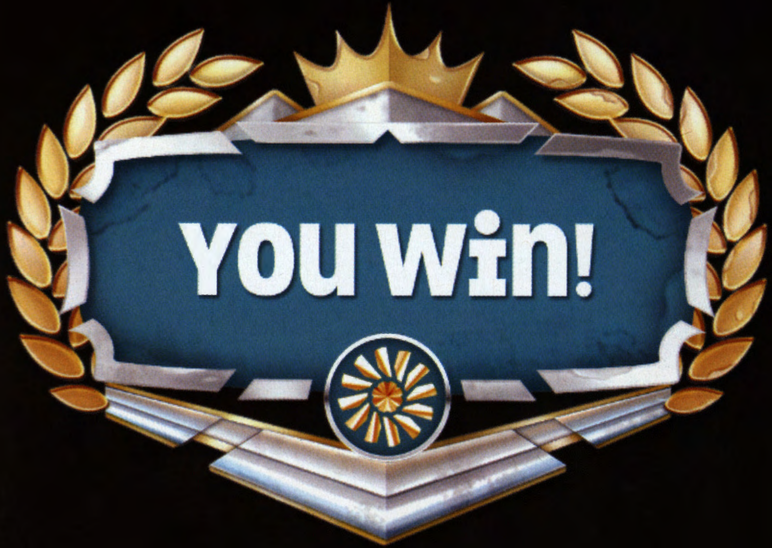
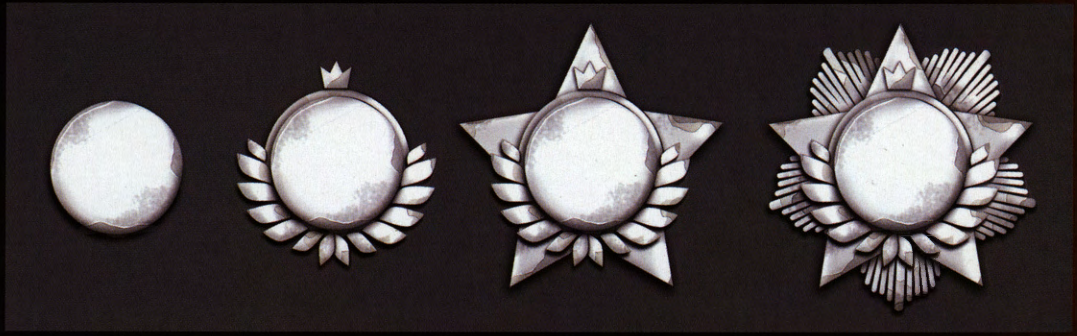
14
538
FRYNO

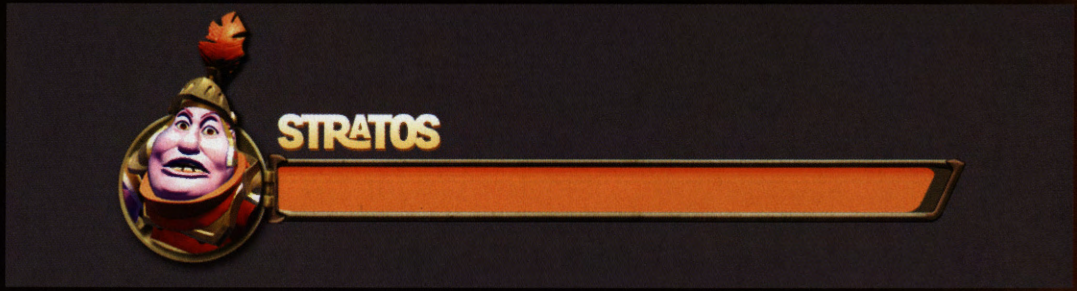

168
OIL pan
8
250

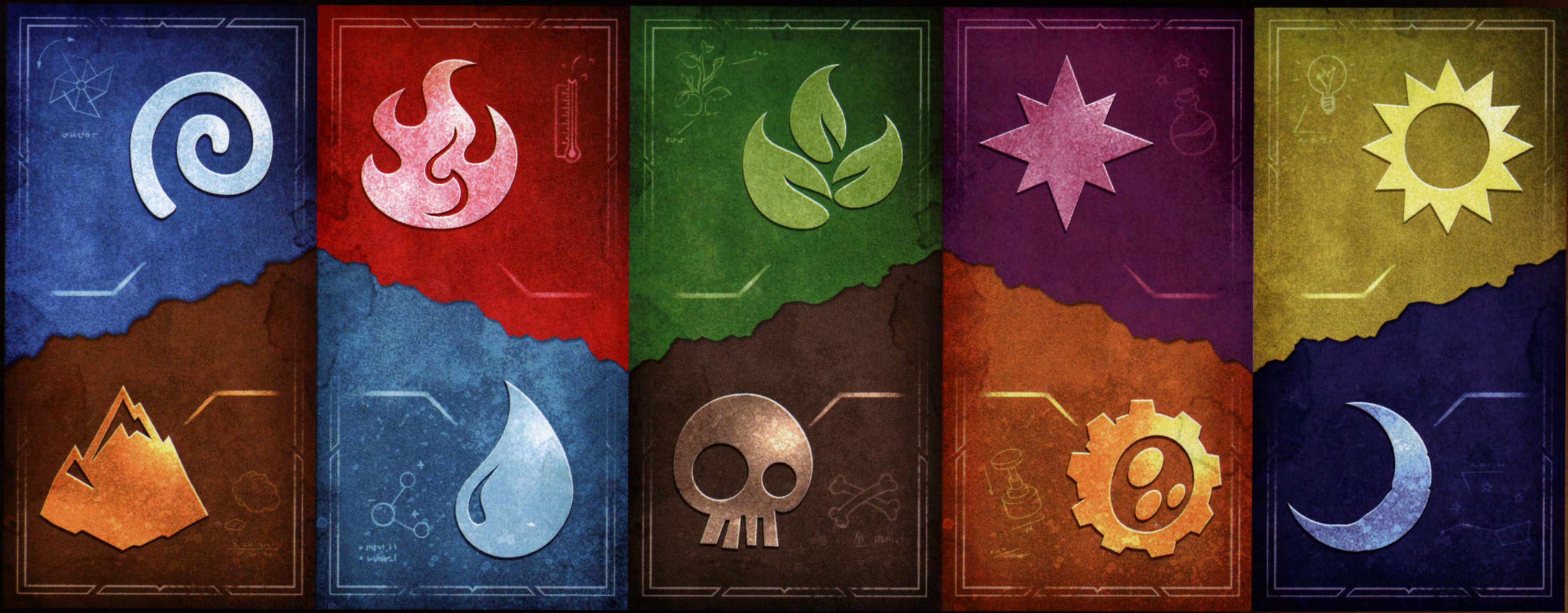

185
OIL pan
8
2500




YOU WIN!

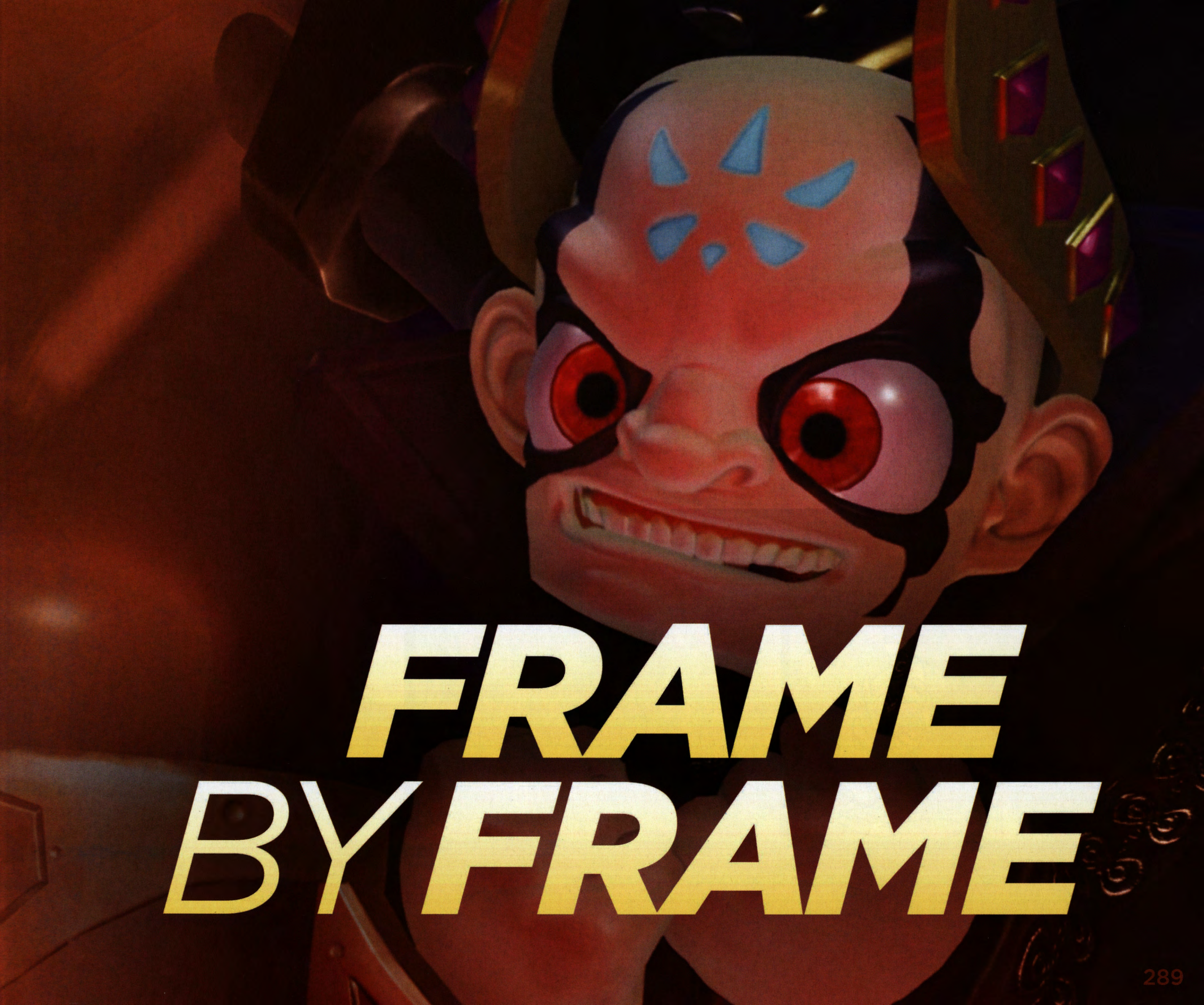



STRATOS



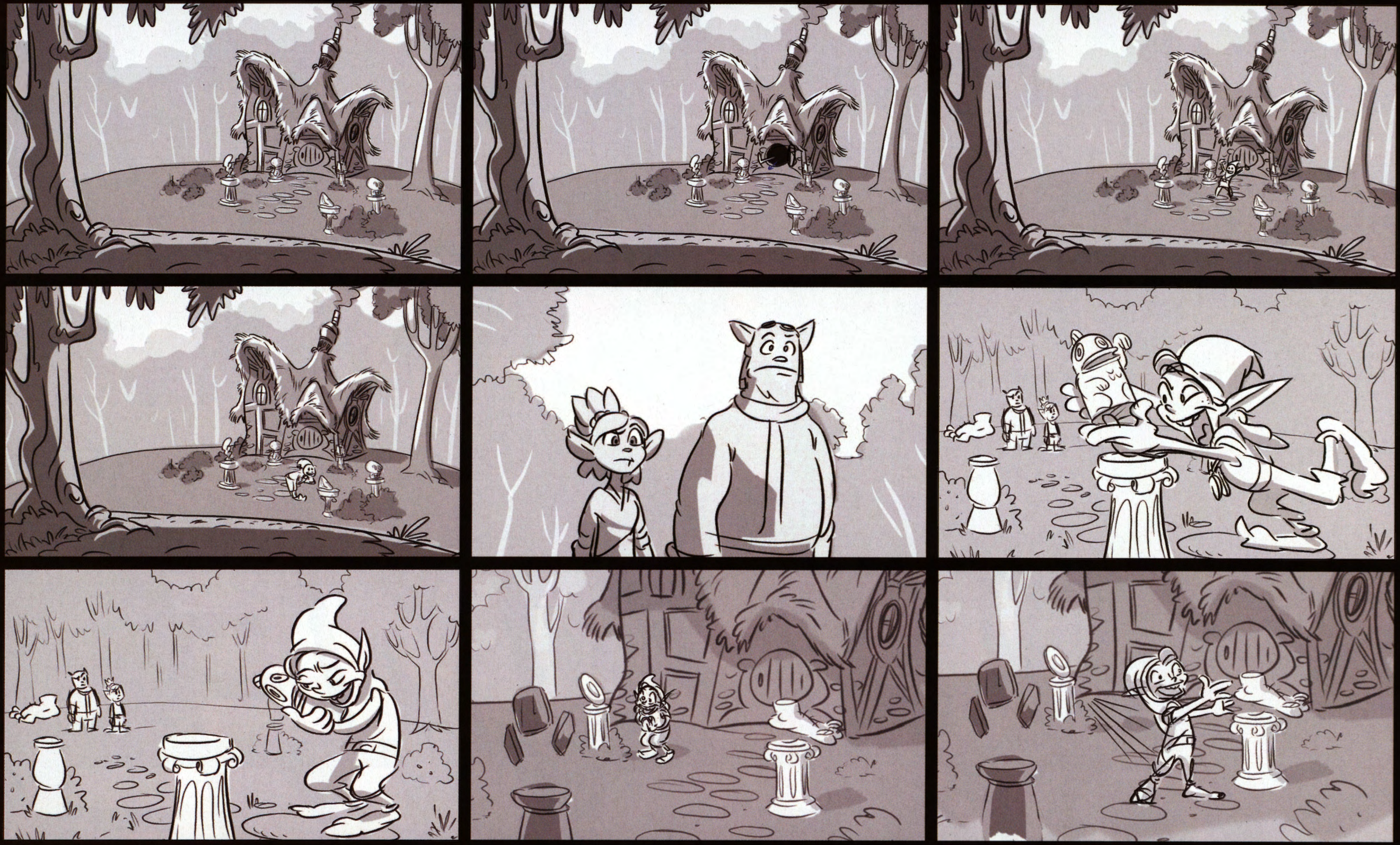
Our goal with SuperChargers was to create a seamless experience between gameplay and cinematics. So everything you see in our movies are in-game assets! This allowed us to develop the emotional depth of our fan-favorite supporting cast without ever taking you out of the epic adventure in Skylands.

– John Paul Rhinemiller



FRAME BY FRAME

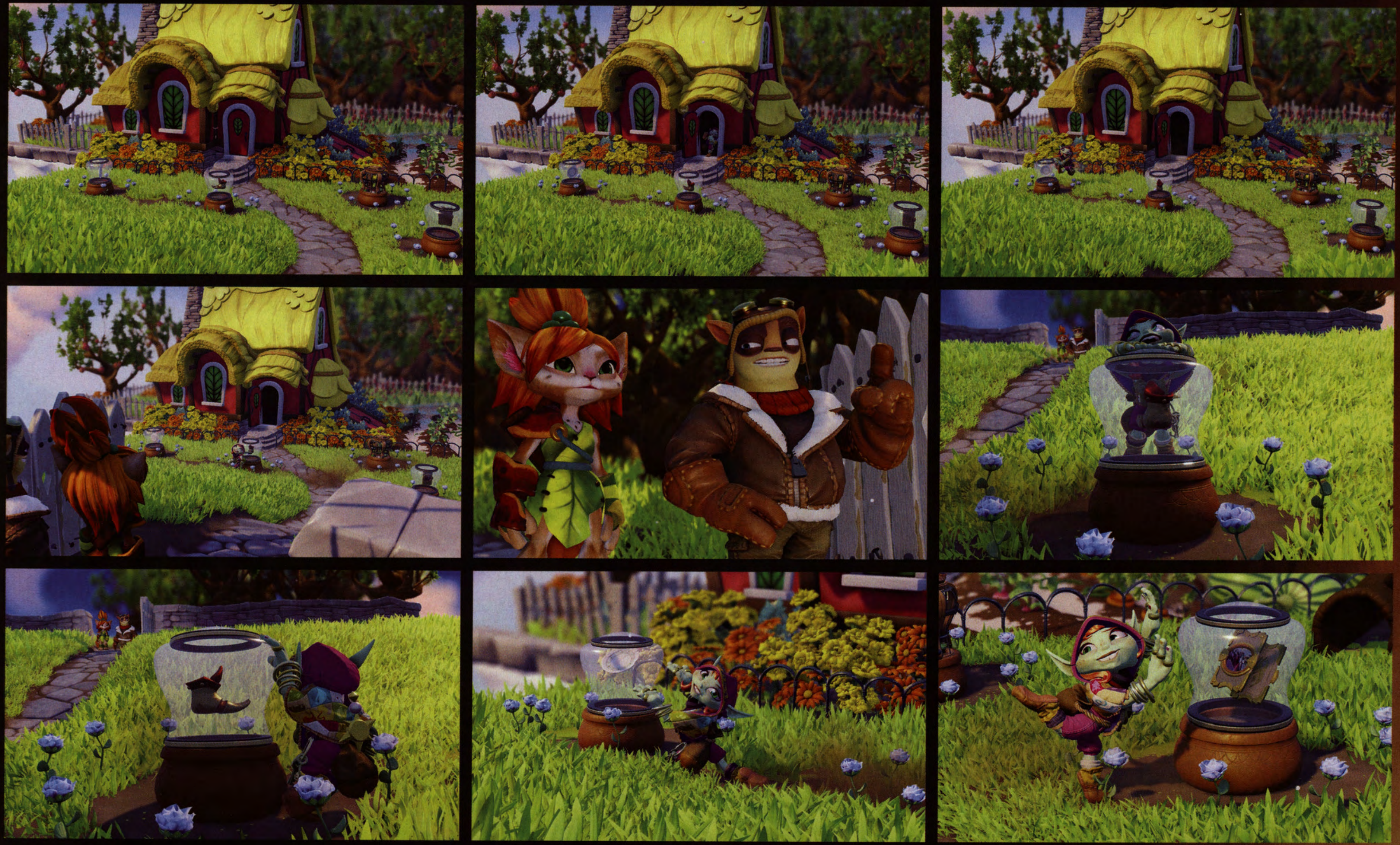
Storyboards



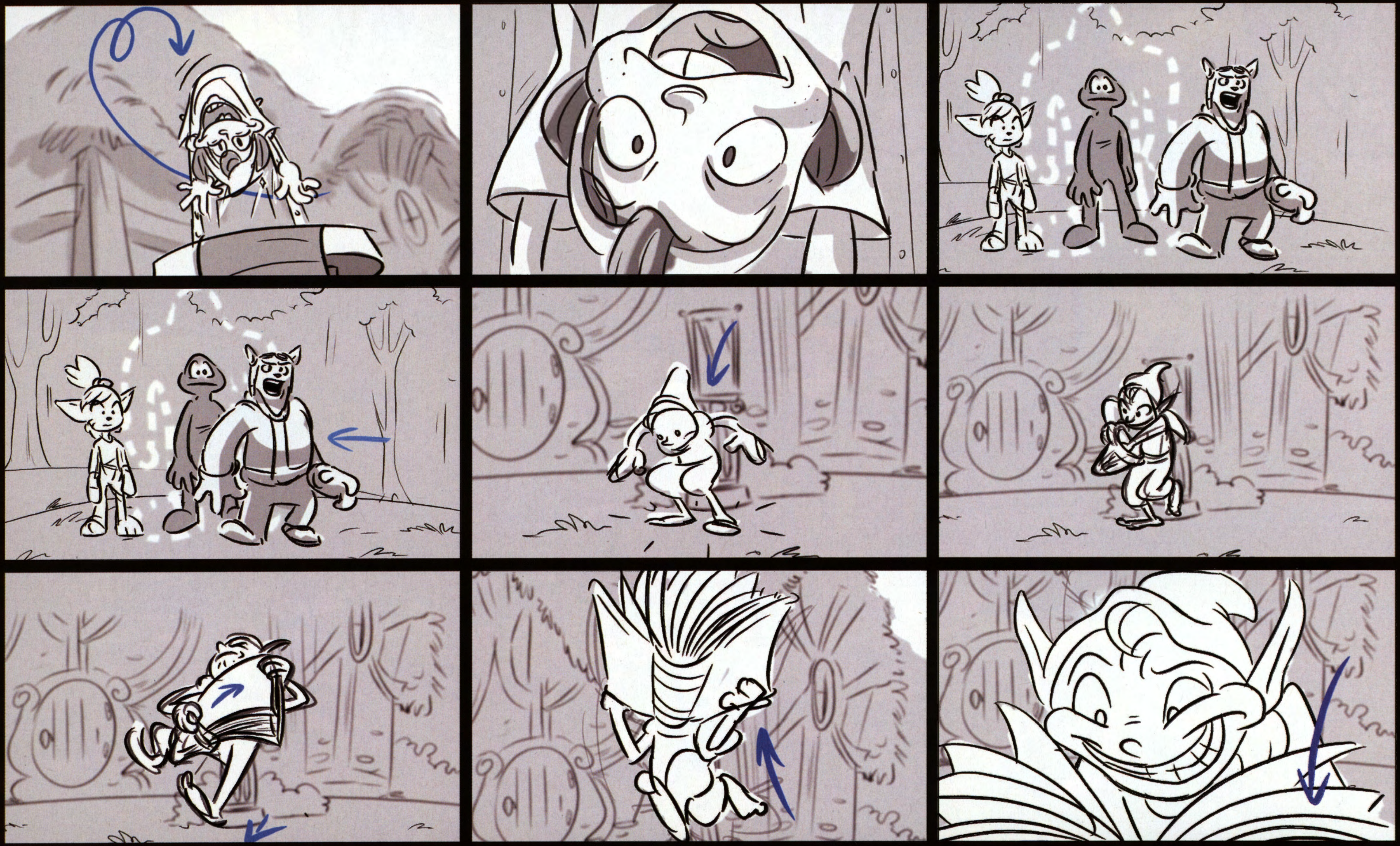
I love all of Eric's boards. They look like they should be in the Sunday comics.

– Jeff Bellio

Final Cutscenes



Storyboards

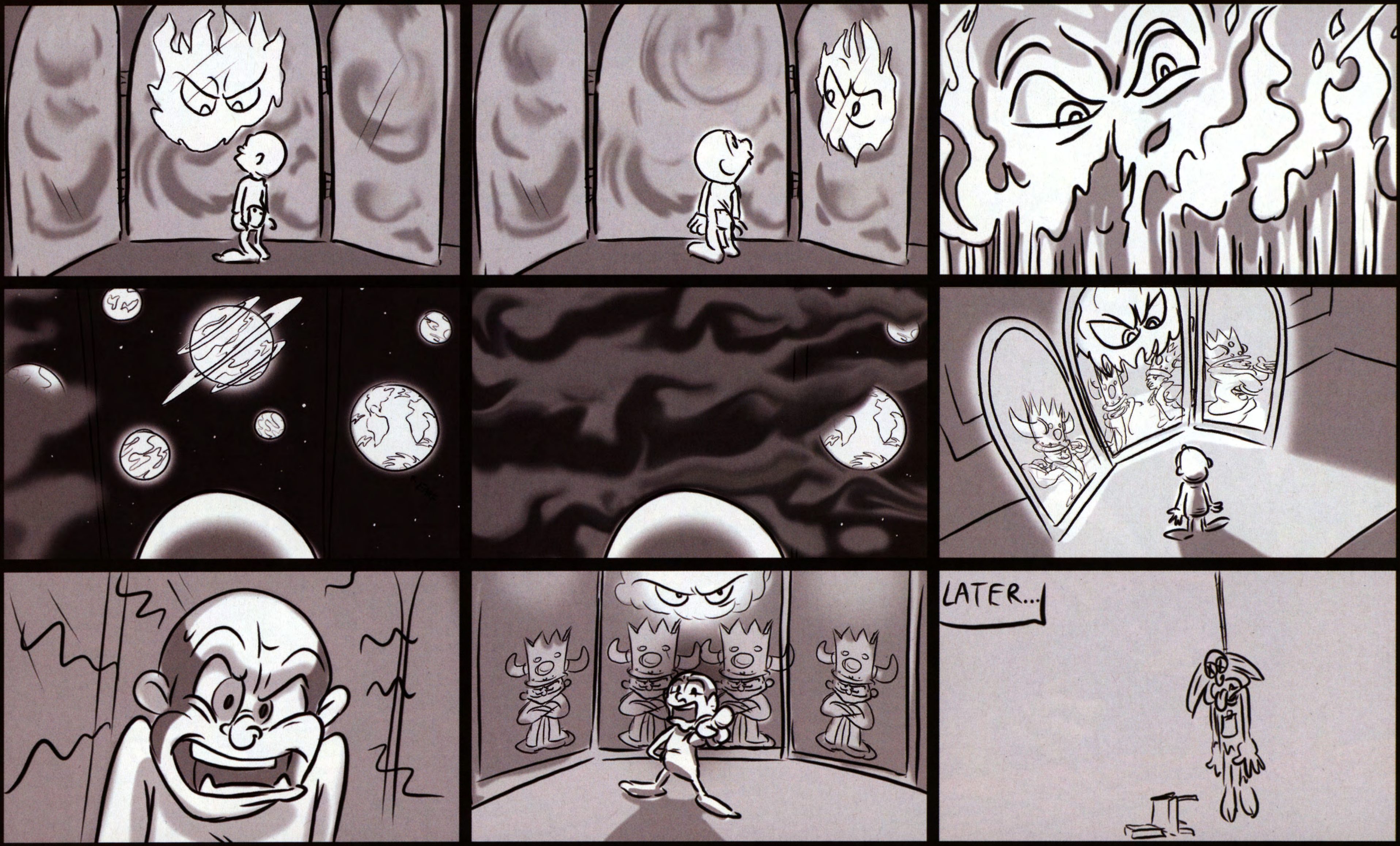


Final Cutscenes

The Troubletaker went through a lot of iterations (including being three elderly aunts) before becoming the bubbly, semi-fourth-wall-breaking collector we finally landed on.

– David A. Rodriguez

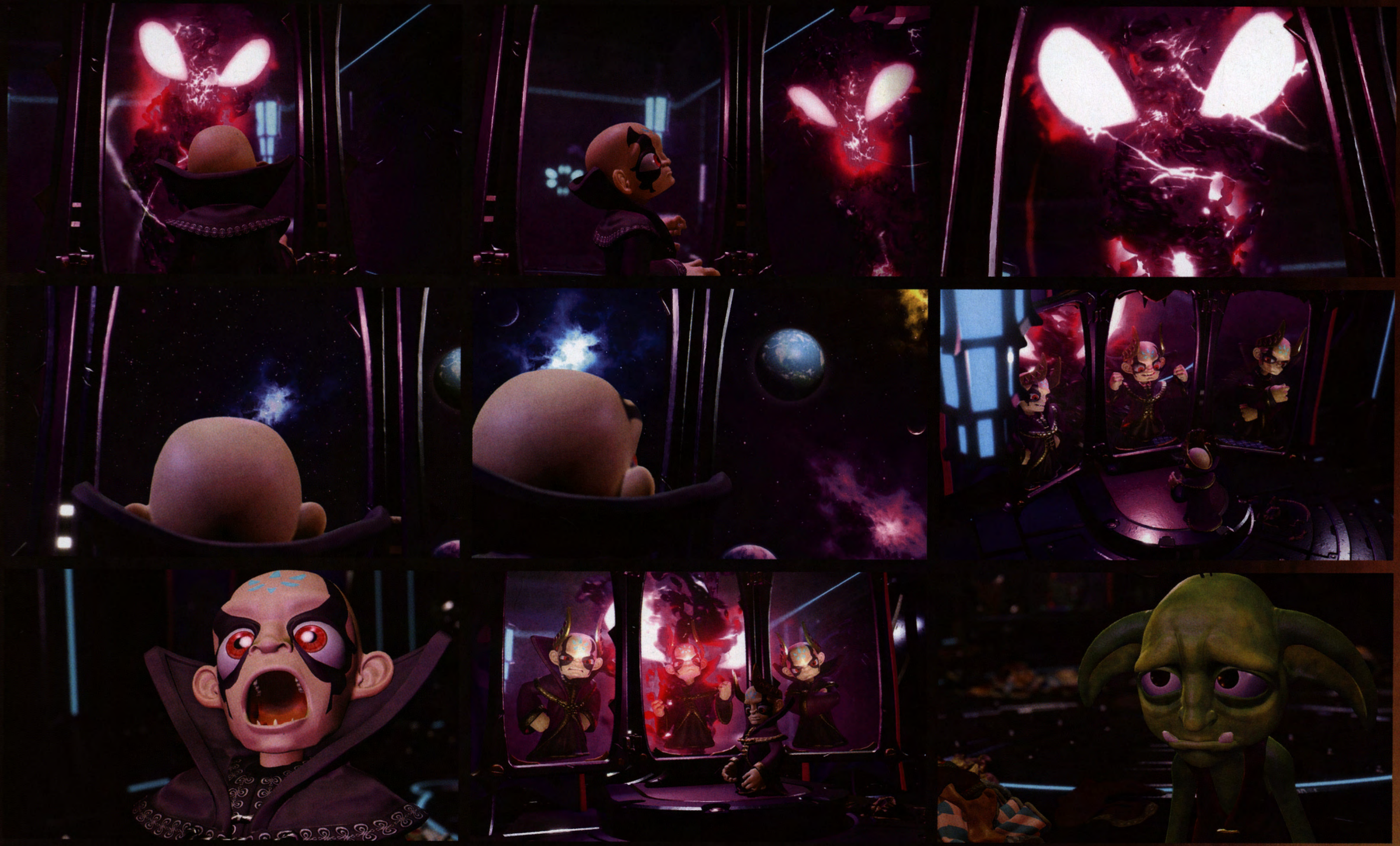
Storyboards



Boy, that escalated quickly.

– Jeff Bellio

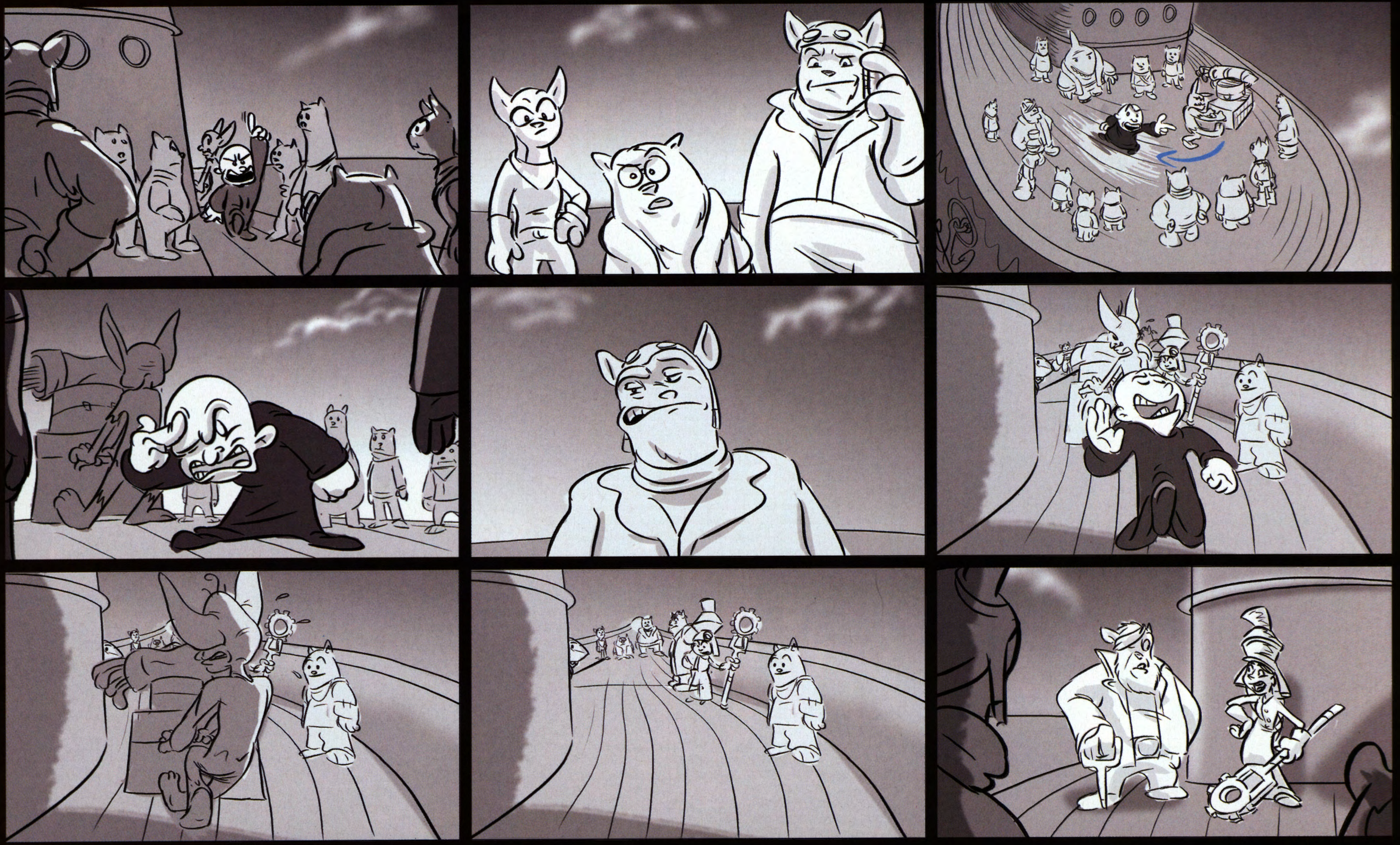
Final Cutscenes



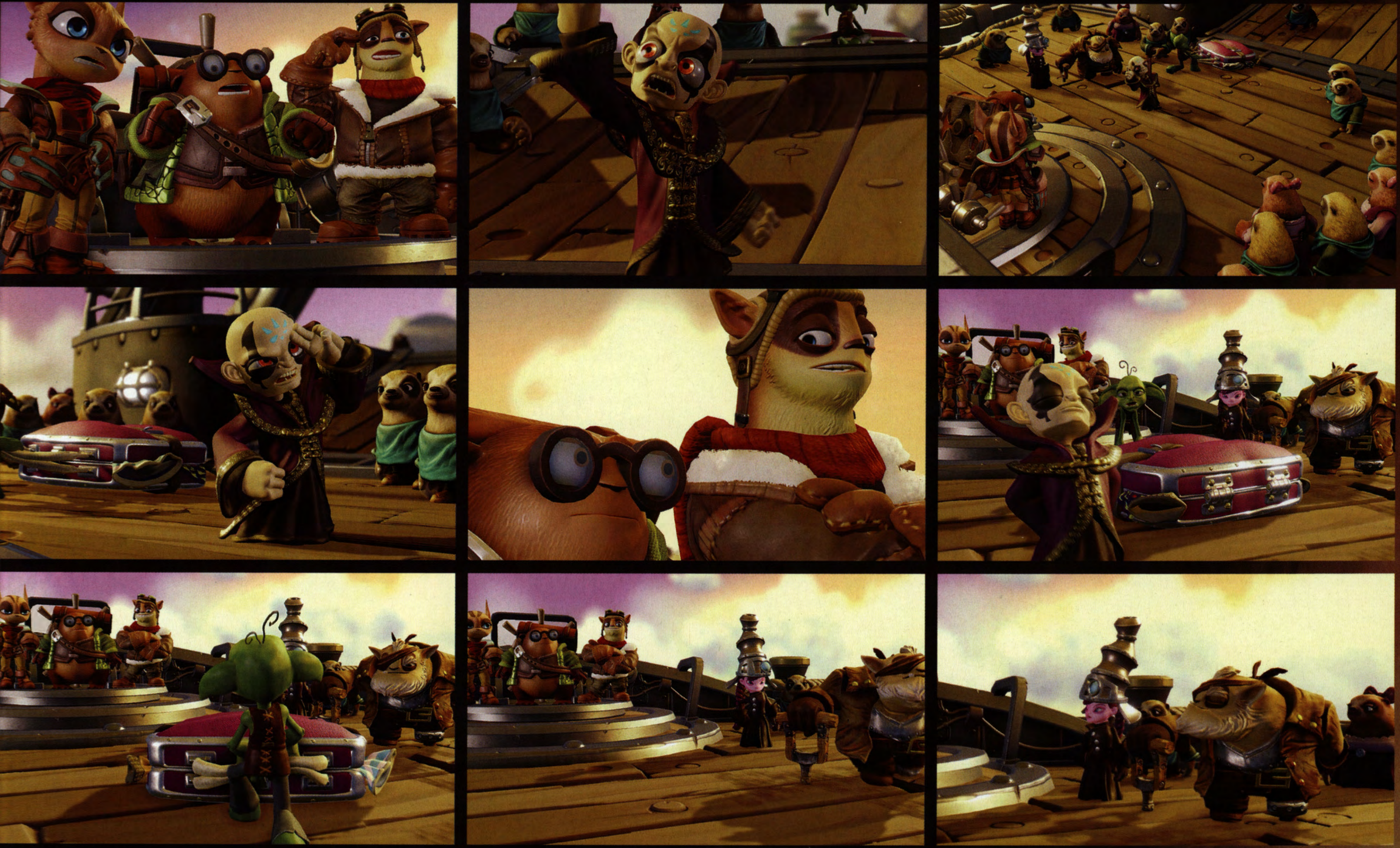
What did Kaos do to deserve Glumshanks, anyway?

– Daniel Rositano

Storyboards



Final Cutscenes



Skylands is like a playground for your imagination. It's a place where up can be down and inside can be out. If you can dream it, I'm sure you can find it in the Skylands.

– Jeremy Russo

WORDS & THANKS

by Dave E. Phillips

As I reflect on our team's accomplishments, one idea continues to come to mind:

> *Striving for greatness*
> *can be the purest of hell.*

VV's culture is centered on quality craftsmanship. Meeting our high standards requires sacrifice, honesty, vulnerability, and a level of endurance that cannot be understated, but the results are undeniably tremendous. *SuperChargers* is bursting with our team's love of craft and unwillingness to settle. You only need to pick up a toy or the game to see it.

In Concept Art, our hell is concentrated up-front. It's always a little strange to finish my work, to then watch from the "outside" as my teammates push themselves past their known limits. For me, it's a little bubble of time that always grounds my ego, because I realize how small my role is and how much others add. So, I'd like to use this venue to say that I noticed.

I noticed when it was all blue sky, when you were grand and fearless with your ideas. I noticed when you had to be practical and disciplined, making those tough choices and letting ideas go. I noticed when you didn't get your way, yet continued to give your heart to the game. I noticed you working late. I noticed you working really late. Then, when I came back in the morning, I noticed you were still at your desk.

I saw you get defeated and I noticed that you didn't accept that defeat. I noticed you when you held up your teammates and how you cared for them. I noticed that you never gave up. I can't thank you enough for that.

The process of creating a game is both heaven and hell, but through your collective strength and ingenuity, you made the result brilliant. Striving for greatness inherently hurts, but when I see what all those cuts and bruises add up to, that pain gives way to glory. I hope all of you have reached that place where you can appreciate this epic feat and all the help you had along the way. It was worth it.

It should also be noted that I had zero to do with getting this art book together. Let's all notice and thank those who did:

- **Jeff Bellio**
- **Steve Moss**
- **Scott Moore**
- **David Rodriguez**
- **Mallory Schleif**
- **Kevin Dobler**
- **Chris Wassum**
- **Eric Wiley**
- **Eric Johnson**
- **Buck Chantel**
- **Nick Ruepp**
- **David Nathanielsz**
- **Nehme Frangie**
- **Spiral Design Studio**

SKYLANDERS
SUPERCHARGERS

Vicarious Visions
Menands, NY

KILLCAMER
BEAK

PMG and Central Studios

Santa Monica, CA

Beenox

Quebec City, Canada

Vicarious Visions™

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